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ABSTRACT

This report assesses findings from content analyses on crime news, investigating whether news coverage reflects actual crime trends; how news coverage depicts minorities and crime; and whether news coverage disproportionately depicts minority youth as perpetrators. Data came from searches of criminal justice and communications databases, which yielded 77 articles appropriate for the study. Findings were summarized and condensed, then compared to findings about crime trends reported by law enforcement agencies. Most studies analyzed newspapers, followed by local television. Overall, findings show that depictions of crime in the news are not reflective of either the rate of crime generally, the proportion of violent crime, the proportion of crime committed by people of color, or the proportion of crime committed by youth. The news media, particularly television news, consistently underrepresent white perpetrators and overrepresent minority perpetrators in violent crime stories. Crime is depicted as a series of distinct events unrelated to any broader context. Crime, especially violent crime, is reported out of proportion to its actual occurrence. Few studies examine portrayals of youth on the news. Recommendations for the news media and for child advocates, youth groups, and civil rights organizations are presented. (Contains 160 references.) (SM)

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ED 451 310

Building Blocks for Youth

For a fair and effective youth justice system

OFF BALANCE:
YOUTH, RACE & CRIME IN THE NEWS

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Building Blocks for Youth

OFF BALANCE:

YOUTH, RACE & CRIME IN THE NEWS

This is the fourth in an ongoing series of analyses published by *Building Blocks for Youth*, a multi-organizational initiative whose goal is to promote a fair and effective juvenile justice system. In January, 2000, *Building Blocks* issued its first report, "The Color of Justice" which found that youth of color in California were more than eight times as likely to be incarcerated by adult courts as White youth, for equally serious crimes. *Building Blocks'* comprehensive national study, "And Justice for Some", reported that youth of color are treated more severely than White youth at each stage of the justice system, even when charged with the same offenses. In October, 2000 *Building Blocks'* third report, "Youth Crime, Adult Time" an in-depth study of youth prosecuted as adults in 18 of the largest jurisdictions in the country, found racial disparities similar to the earlier reports, and raised serious concerns about the fairness and appropriateness of the process.

The initiative has five major components:

(1) Research on the disparate impact of the justice system on minority youth, on the effects of new adult-court transfer legislation in the states, and on the privatization of juvenile justice facilities by for-profit corporations;

(2) Analyses of decisionmaking at critical points in the justice system, including arrest, detention, adjudication, and disposition;

(3) Direct advocacy on behalf of youth in the justice system, particularly on issues that disproportionately affect youth of color such as conditions of confinement in jails, prisons, and juvenile facilities; access to counsel and adequacy of representation in juvenile court; and "zero tolerance" and other issues relating to school suspensions and expulsions;

(4) Constituency-building among African-American, Latino, and Native-American and other minority organizations, as well as organizations in the medical, mental health, legal, law enforcement, child welfare, civil rights, human rights, religious, victim's rights, and domestic violence areas, at the national, state, and local levels;

(5) Development of communications strategies to provide timely, accurate, and relevant information to these constituencies, public officials, policymakers, the media, and the public.

The partners in the initiative are the Youth Law Center, American Bar Association Juvenile Justice Center, Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, Juvenile Law Center, Minorities in Law Enforcement, National Council on Crime and Delinquency and Pretrial Services Resource Center.

The initiative is supported by the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Annie E. Casey, Ford, Mott, MacArthur, Rockefeller and William T. Grant foundations, and the Center on Crime, Communities & Culture of the Open Society Institute. This project was supported by award No. 98-JN-FX-K003 awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice or the supporting foundations.

www.buildingblocksforyouth.org

INTRODUCTION

Race and the Juvenile Justice System

In January 2000, the *Building Blocks for Youth* initiative issued its first report, *The Color of Justice*, which found that youth of color in California were more than eight times as likely to be incarcerated by adult courts as White youth for equally serious crimes.[1] *Building Blocks*' comprehensive national study, *And Justice for Some*, reported that youth of color are treated more severely than White youth at each stage of the justice system, even when charged with the same offenses.[2] In October, 2000, *Building Blocks*' third report, *Youth Crime, Adult Time*, an in-depth study of youth prosecuted as adults in 18 of the largest jurisdictions in the country, found racial disparities similar to the earlier reports, and raised serious concerns about the fairness and appropriateness of the process.[3]

These reports have built upon a growing body of research showing that youth of color receive disparate treatment in America's juvenile justice system. In the most recent reporting to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention of the US Department of Justice, every state but one that reported data found disproportionate confinement of minority youth.[4] More than two-thirds of youths confined in America are minority youth, even though minorities make up only about one-third of America's youth population.

In a seminal meta-analysis conducted by researchers Carl Pope and Richard Feyerherm, two-thirds of the carefully constructed studies of state and local juvenile justice systems they analyzed found that there was a "race effect" at some stage of the juvenile justice process that affected outcomes for minorities for the worse.[5] Their research suggested that "the effects of race may be felt at various decision points, they may be direct or indirect, and they may accumulate as youth continue through the system." They suggest that the race effect in the juvenile justice system may be more common than in the adult system.

There is evidence that stereotyping is affecting the treatment young people experience at the hands of the juvenile justice system. According to a 1998 analysis by University of Washington researchers, court reports prepared prior to sentencing by probation officers consistently give more negative portrayals of Black youth even when controlling for offense behavior and prior record, thus leading to harsher sentencing recommendations for Blacks.[6] Professor George Bridges concluded that "The children would be charged with the same crime, be the same age and have the same criminal history, but the different ways they were described was just shocking."

More Fear, Less Crime, Fear of Minority Crime

Despite sharp declines in youth crime, the public expresses great fear of its own young people. Although violent crime by youth in 1998 was at its lowest point in the 25-year history of the National Crime Victimization Survey[7], 62% of poll respondents felt that juvenile crime was on the increase.[8] In the 1998/99 school year, there was less than a one-in-two-million chance of being killed in a school

in America, yet 71% of respondents to an NBC/*Wall Street Journal* poll felt that a school shooting was likely in their community. Despite a 40% decline in school associated violent deaths between 1998 and 1999 and declines in other areas of youth violence, respondents to a *USA Today* poll were 49% more likely to express fear of their schools in 1999 than in 1998.[9]

This response is not simply an artifact of highly publicized school shootings. A 1996 CBS/*New York Times* poll, taken prior to any of the highly publicized school shootings, showed that 84% of respondents believed juvenile crime was on the increase. In a 1996 California poll, 60% of respondents reported believing that juveniles were responsible for most violent crime, when youths were actually responsible for about 13% of violent crime that year.[10]

In an environment in which fear of youth crime and actual crime are so out of sync, policies affecting young people are bound to be influenced. Since 1992, 47 states have made their juvenile justice systems more punitive by eroding confidentiality protections or making it easier to try juveniles as adults. For example, crime by youth fell more during the 1980's and 1990's than adult crime in California, yet California voters overwhelmingly passed proposition 21 in 2000, requiring that youth as young as age 14 be automatically tried as adults for certain offenses.[11] In one estimate, more than 200,000 youths were prosecuted in adult court in America in 1998.[12] Some of the policy changes may have been in response to the jump in juvenile homicides with guns from the mid-1980's to the early 1990's but other categories of juvenile crime did not increase during that period, and the public had unrealistic perceptions about crime long before those increases.

At the same time as Americans are fearful of youth crime, they are more likely to exaggerate the threat of victimization by minorities. Twice as many White Americans believe they are more likely to be victimized by a minority than a White, despite the fact that Whites are actually three times more likely to be victimized by Whites than by minorities.[13]

What Is The News Media's Role?

More than 70 years ago Walter Lippmann wrote a now-classic work, *Public Opinion*.[14] In that book he described the impossibility of knowing through direct experience everything that it was necessary to know to function as a citizen in our modern democracy. Instead, Lippmann explained, we depend on "pictures in our heads," many of them delivered by the news media, to tell us about the world. Our decisions about how to behave and how to construct our society have to be based on those pictures, Lippmann believed, because the world was too vast to experience personally.

The public depends on the media for its pictures of crime. Three quarters (76%) of the public say they form their opinions about crime from what they see or read in the news, more than three times the number who state that they get their primary information on crime from personal experience (22%).[15] In a *Los Angeles Times* poll, 80% of respondents stated that the media's coverage of violent crime had increased their personal fear of

being a victim.[16] A 1998 report by Public Agenda found that daily TV news viewers were more likely to think that crime and drugs were Baltimore's number one problem than were those who watch the news less frequently (67% vs. 42%).[17] Despite declining crime rates in Baltimore, one woman there stated, "I get more nervous and worried the more I see, so the less I see, the less crime I would feel is going on out there."[18]

These survey results are consistent with communications research finding that the news media largely determine what issues we collectively think about, how we think about them, and what kinds of policy alternatives are considered viable.[19] News portrayals of juvenile justice issues are significant for how they influence policy makers and the public regarding what should be done to ensure public safety. Issues are not considered by the public and policy makers unless they are visible, and they are not visible unless the news brings them to light.

Most people have little or no personal experience with juvenile crime because adults commit most of the crime in the nation: about 89% of all crimes cleared by arrest are committed by adults.[20]

The public depends on the media even more for its pictures of crime done by or to minority youth, since most of the public has no direct personal experience with crime by minority youth. Eighty-six percent of White homicide victims are killed by other Whites, and overall, Whites are three times as likely to be victimized by other Whites as by minorities. The chances that a White adult will be the victim of a crime by a Black youth are quite small. Consequently, America's dominant voting and opinion setting block – its White adult population – depends on the news to explain minority youth crime to them.

The news media should help as many citizens as possible make sense of the world around them. But does the current approach to covering youth and crime maximize public understanding? What information on youth and crime does the American public get from the news? In view of the powerful impact news coverage of crime has on public opinion and the dependence of most Americans on the news media for depictions of crime, there are several important questions we have about the accuracy of the picture Americans are receiving from the news media:

1. Does news coverage reflect actual crime trends?
2. How does news coverage depict minorities and crime?
3. Does news coverage disproportionately depict youth of color as perpetrators of crime?

The remainder of this study will seek to answer these three questions.

METHODS

Our objective was to compile and examine the best social science that has analyzed the content of crime news to answer the questions above, particularly analyses that included examinations of race and youth. This report assesses and consolidates the findings from those content analyses on crime news.

Collecting the Universe of Studies on Crime News

To identify scientific content analyses of crime news, we conducted searches of criminal justice and communications databases for articles containing the following key words: "content analysis," "crime," "media," "race," "violence," and/or "youth." Communications and criminal justice databases included the Criminal Justice Abstracts, SocioFile, the Missouri School of Journalism's study of Race & the Media, the DialogWeb(TM) database, MERLIN's OVID database (the Current Contents and Periodical Abstracts databases) and the JSTOR online database. Phyllis Schultze, Information Specialist, Rutgers Law Library, conducted the initial search of the criminal justice databases. We augmented the electronic search with pertinent articles cited in the references of these articles that had not turned up in our keyword searches.

Analyzing the Universe of Studies on Crime News

The search yielded 146 articles. The authors, with the assistance of University of Missouri journalism graduate student Maria Len-Rios and Justice Policy Institute intern Alea Brown, read, abstracted and categorized all 146 articles for their relevance to the issues of youth, crime and race. Thirty-six of the articles were newspaper accounts or reports that did not offer primary data analyses. We eliminated these articles from our analysis.

Level 1 and Level 2 studies. Our first task was to determine whether the study presented original data on news content. We also determined whether the study was published in a peer-reviewed journal. We focused our attention on the 65 articles published in peer-reviewed journals because we believed these studies would provide us with evidence put through the most rigorous scrutiny. These articles were the best that social science has to offer on the topic of race, crime, youth and the news. We dubbed these "Level 1" studies.

The remaining 45 articles included empirical analyses published by organizations or researchers without the benefit of peer-review. While these articles do not offer the same level of confidence as the peer-reviewed studies, we believed that the findings warrant examination and discussion here. We called these "Level 2" studies.

Several of the 110 Level 1 and Level 2 studies were ultimately eliminated from our analysis because they were primarily about single events (e.g., O.J. Simpson), "reality" shows which we deemed entertainment rather than news[21], media effects, photographs only, non-US news, or topics other than analyses of general news that included crime news content. Ultimately, 33 studies were eliminated for one of the reasons listed above (see Appendix 1). Our conclusions are based on the findings synthesized from the remaining 77 published studies.

We also excluded from our analysis the several books that have been written on the subject of race and crime because we wanted to focus on studies that had been peer-reviewed. However, in the case of studies of youth depictions, because there were so few studies, we wanted to include any available analyses. Therefore, we

Overall, the studies taken together indicate that depictions of crime in the news are not reflective of either the rate of crime generally, the proportion of crime which is violent, the proportion of crime committed by people of color, or the proportion of crime committed by youth.

included findings from studies reported in books when the methodology was well described and/or we could contact the authors with questions. We note in the text if the study we are discussing is from a book.

Most studies analyze the type of crime reported in the news and the characteristics of that coverage. Some studies compare the type and frequency of crime coverage to crime statistics. A few studies compare crime coverage to public opinion about crime. Several studies tested media effects (e.g., whether news stories changed attitudes or opinions of audiences) but did not analyze content, though several of these studies are referred to in the body of the report because of the insight they offer as we interpret the various content analyses. Appendix 1 lists all 110 Level 1 and Level 2 studies. A complete bibliography is available in the References. [22]

Comparison of news content to crime statistics. Once we had summarized and condensed the findings about news content, we compared those findings to crime trends reported by law enforcement agencies. For example, if studies of the news showed an ever larger proportion of the "news hole" — the amount of newspaper or television time devoted to news — occupied by violent crime, was that simply a reflection of actual increases in violent crime during the same time period? According to the best scientific analyses of media content, is the news providing an accurate reflection of crime trends? We ascertained whether the studies themselves made the relevant comparisons to crime trends, and, if they did not, we collected the appropriate crime data to compare to the content of the news. We collected the relevant criminal justice data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and US Department of Justice and state or local law enforcement surveys, where applicable.[23]

FINDINGS

The studies we surveyed covered a range of media[24] — local and network television, newspapers, and broadcast and print news magazines — from 1910 through 2001. Most studies analyzed newspapers (N=53), followed by local television (N=26). Twenty studies analyzed network television news. Only three studies analyzed print news magazines and two analyzed the content of TV news magazine programs. (The numbers add to more than 77 because several studies analyzed more than one medium).

Overall, the studies taken together indicate that depictions of crime in the news are not reflective of either the rate of crime generally, the proportion of crime which is violent, the proportion of crime committed by people of color, or the proportion of crime committed by youth. The problem is not the inaccuracy of individual stories, but that the cumulative choices of what is included — or not included — in the news presents the public with a false picture of higher frequency and severity of crime than is actually the case.

Furthermore, the studies show that crime is depicted as a series of distinct events unrelated to any broader context. Most studies that examine race and crime find that the proportion of crime committed by people of color (usually African Americans) is over-reported and that Black victims are

under-represented. Other studies find that crimes committed by people of color are covered in proportion with arrest rates, but that crimes committed by Whites are undercovered.

Finding #1: The news media report crime, especially violent crime, out of proportion to its actual occurrence.

Studies of newspapers and television identified three clear patterns. First, and most consistent over time, is that newspapers and television emphasize violent crime. Second, the more unusual the crime, the greater the chance it will be covered. Third, the rate of crime coverage increased while real crime rates dropped. While all media emphasize violence in their news, newspapers do it to a lesser degree than network television, which does it less than local TV news.[25] There are fewer studies of Spanish language newspapers and television news broadcast in the US, but those that exist also demonstrate an emphasis on crime consistent with studies of English-language US news.[26,27,28,29,30]

Violent Crime Dominates Crime Coverage. Crime is often the dominant topic on local television news[31], network news[32], and TV newsmagazines.[33] On network newscasts, crime and violence are covered more than any other topic on the news. Crime is a newspaper staple as well. When the news media cover crime, they cover little other than violent crime.[34] While crimes against property occupy most of law enforcement's attention, violent crimes occupy television producers, newspaper editors, and reporters'.[35] In general, TV crime reporting is the inverse of crime frequency. That is, murder is reported most often on the news though it happens the least.[36] As we discuss later in this report, this is not surprising since homicide is a crime with much greater consequences than property crimes and embodies many aspects reporters seek in a "good story."

The more unusual the crime or violence, the more likely it is to be covered. In some studies, the number of victims was the strongest predictor of whether or not a crime would be covered.[37] Other factors that increase the likelihood of a homicide being reported in the news are multiple victims, multiple offenders, an unusual method, a White victim, a child, elderly, or female victim, or occurrence in an affluent neighborhood.[38,39] For example, a study of five years of homicide coverage in the *Los Angeles Times* from 1990 through 1994 found that the least common homicides received the most coverage.[40] That is, homicides between strangers and interracial homicides received more coverage when, in reality, most murder victims in Los Angeles County were killed by someone they knew and someone of the same race.

The disproportionate coverage of homicide was also prevalent in television news. For example, Rocky Mountain Media Watch's one-day snapshot of local television news in 55 markets around the country on February 26, 1997, the Kaiser Family Foundation analyses of national television news in 1996, and Gilliam et al.'s studies of the evening news on KABC-TV in Los Angeles from 1993 to 1994 were remarkably consistent. All three found that homicides made up more than a quarter of the crimes reported on the

evening news (27% - 29%) while from one-to two-tenths of one percent of all arrests in those years was for a homicide. On one Los Angeles local station this amounted to 14 homicide stories for every homicide committed.[41] As the authors note, "the seriousness and newsworthiness of murder cannot be denied, but the level of 'distortion' is impressive." Other violent crime categories were also portrayed out of proportion to their actual share of arrests.

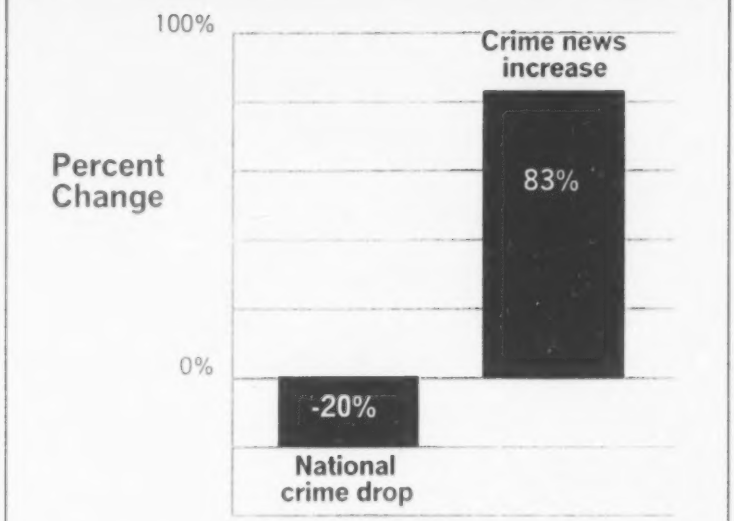
Crime coverage has increased while real crime rates have fallen. Overall the rate of crime coverage in the news did not reflect crime trends. For example, one of the few studies of newsmagazines found that increases in crime reporting in *Time* magazine reflected increases in crime during 1975 and 1979.[42] But it also found a 55% increase in crime coverage in *Time* from 1979 through 1982 when the actual crime rate increased by only 1%.

On network television news, crime coverage doubled from 1992 to 1993, from 830 to 1,698 stories. This made crime the leading TV news topic for the first time since 1987. The coverage continued rising, reaching 1,949 stories in 1994 and 2,574 in 1995, more than triple the total recorded in 1992. Crime news peaked in 1995 primarily because of the O.J. Simpson trial coverage, but never dropped to its pre-O.J. levels.[43] From 1990 through 1999, Center for Media and Public Affairs researchers catalogued 135,449 stories on ABC, CBS, and NBC evening newscasts. Crime was the biggest topic of the decade with 14,289 crime stories. Crime news declined for the first time in 2000, dropping 39% from the previous year, but remains the third most frequent topic on network news.[44]

Local television news has not been monitored for as long as the networks. However, several studies done in the mid-1990's by Rocky Mountain Media Watch (RMMW) provide similar evidence for local TV news.[45] RMMW volunteers collect late night news broadcasts from local TV stations on the same night around the country. All RMMW studies show high levels of crime reporting, so much so that RMMW created a measure dubbed the "mayhem index" to account for local TV news attention to crime, violence and disaster coverage. In every year examined, crime stories dominate the local TV newscasts, and violent crime, particularly murder, dominates the crime stories. For example, in 1997, RMMW found that crime topped the list of subjects covered on local evening news, was one-third of all local news stories, and appeared three times as much as the next closest subject. RMMW suggests that crime coverage not only persists out of proportion to actual crime, but that it also uses up time that could be devoted to other important topics.

The Kaiser Family Foundation (1998) has recently begun tracking news agendas, with an interest in health issues. Its studies of network and local TV news in 1996 found that crime was the most common story on local news. Of the 17,000 local news stories broadcast during a three month period, the number of violent crime stories broadcast, 2,035, was almost double the number of health stories (1,265), three times the number of foreign news reports (630), and four times the number of education stories (501). In contrast to the local news findings, crime ranked sixth on the network news agenda during the same period.[46]

Graph 1: Nationally, crime dropped by 20% from 1990 to 1998 while network television showed an 83% increase in crime news.



Source: Center for Media & Public Affairs,2000a, US DOJ 2000

Summary & Implications

The news media has proven to be a poor vehicle for discerning crime trends. While there was a 1% increase in crime from 1979 to 1982, crime coverage in *Time* increased by 55% during that time period.[47] Nationally, crime dropped by 20% from 1990 to 1998 while network TV showed an 83% increase in crime news.[48] While homicide coverage was increasing on network news—473% increase from 1990 to 1998—homicides were down 32.9% from 1990 to 1998.[49] (See Graphs 1 & 2).

Of course, homicide is a far more serious crime than car theft or robbery. It deserves serious attention from journalists — it's appropriate to report more intensely on murders than vandalism. Yet the continued focus on the most serious crimes leaves the public with an incomplete picture. Additionally, whether it is more newsworthy or not, reporting more frequently on a category of crime (murder) that is declining is likely to lead the public to form erroneous beliefs about crime trends.

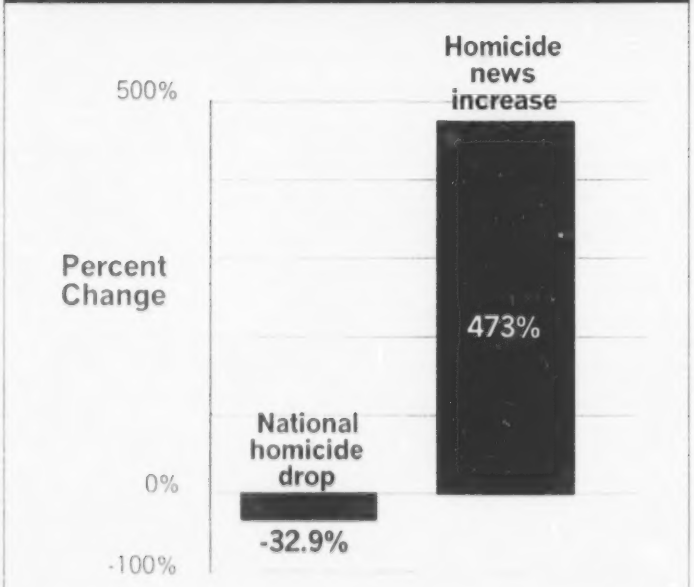
Furthermore, if the most unusual homicides get the only news attention, audiences will assume those are the typical homicides, or that they are more prevalent than they actually are. Based on the news, the public may (and indeed, does, according to public opinion surveying) assume that interracial murders by strangers are typical, yet that is not the case in the US. The repetition of the unusual has consequences for how audiences interpret crime. The steady diet

of violent crime, coupled with the absence of nonviolent crime and general context, means that the rare crime looks like the normal crime; homicide is the prototypical crime in the news. Further, increased coverage of crime in general and homicides in particular while crime and homicides are declining gives the viewing public a skewed view of crime trends. We believe this explains, to a large extent, why the public consistently overestimates the rate of crime.

Criticism of the news for its emphasis on violent crime is certainly not new. Periodically, pundits, critics, community groups, and others bemoan the "if it bleeds, it leads" edict that seems to govern local TV news in particular. Even some who produce the news claim to hate the mandate, sometimes feeling they have no choice. "Yes, the crime reporting around the local stations is disproportionate to reality," KTLA-TV news director David Goldberg told the *Los Angeles Times*. "It helps drive the fear in our communities. You would think [Los Angeles] was one of the most dangerous places on earth. But unfortunately, newsrooms find crime very easy to cover. It's their way of not having to work hard."[50]

Violence stories are easy to do and readily available, perfect for a deadline driven newsroom. They are often about life and death — "good stories," full of drama and

Graph 2: From 1990-1998, homicide coverage was increasing on network news by 473% while homicides were down 32.9%



Source: Center for Media & Public Affairs,2000a, US DOJ 2000

emotion — that keep audiences attentive. All of these reasons contribute to the consistency of the findings in the studies of news.

Another important factor in the current emphasis on crime coverage is the advent of 24-hour news. Stations have a lot of time to fill, and crime coverage is easy, cheap and available. In his book critiquing routine crime coverage, former crime reporter and editor David Krajicek suggests that a "Murdock effect" pushed crime coverage further into the sensational. During the 1980's, stations owned by media mogul Rupert Murdock began broadcasting sensationalistic news-like programs such as "A Current Affair." The programs pursued topics in a manner most traditional news outlets eschewed. But, Krajicek argues, in the late 1980's, mainstream news outlets began to cite "A Current Affair" as a news source, allowing them to report on celebrity scandals and other crime that had previously been reserved for the tabloids. Now, according to Krajicek, the networks included in their broadcasts stories that they previously would not have investigated or reported. As local and network TV news repeatedly aired tape from shows like "A Current Affair," Krajicek maintains, the "definition of legitimate news had changed."[51]

Finding #2: The news media report crime as a series of individual events without adequate attention to its overall context.

Presumably, if the emphasis on crime is satisfying viewers' desire to know about it, then print and broadcast journalists should also be explaining it. Yet most crime news is episodic, describing crime events as if they are isolated from larger social, historical, or environmental contexts. Studies spanning almost 100 years — 1910 to 2000 — are consistent in their findings that news reports describe what happened with little reporting about why the crime and violence happened or what could be done about it.[52] In one example, researchers found that the nation's dominant news magazines portrayed the race riots of the late 1960's as "random, unpredictable, and most of all, unjustified" events outside a larger social context[53], despite Kerner Commission findings that there were many identifiable — and justifiable — reasons for the riots.[54] Paul Klite of RMMW notes that local TV news covers all the elements of the crime: the search, the scene, the arrest, and the trial, with dramatic video of flashing lights, yellow crime-scene tape and grieving relatives, but little of the "context, consequences, patterns or solutions that surround the events."[55] The lack of explanations for crime and violence complicates the problem of exaggerated frequency in news stories by leaving the impression that the violence is inevitable.

Finding #3: The news media, particularly television news, unduly connect race and crime, especially violent crime.

Several studies examine race in crime news, but the findings are less straightforward. People of color are depicted more often in crime stories than in non-crime stories,[56] but not all studies differentiate between victims and perpetrators. Some count depictions of

people of color; others don't count how often perpetrators or victims of color appear but analyze the characteristics of the portrayals and the circumstances in which they appear. Other studies examine how much attention was paid to people of color in crime stories by counting the number of words in stories with perpetrators or victims of color. These different research approaches make it more difficult to draw conclusions across studies.

Nonetheless, there is some consistent evidence that a disproportionate number of perpetrators on the news are people of color, especially African Americans. African American perpetrators are depicted as dangerous and indistinguishable as a group, they appear more frequently in crime news stories than Whites, and interracial crime is covered disproportionately. The strongest evidence shows that people of color, again primarily African Americans, are underrepresented as victims in crime news. [57]

Table 1: Nineteen* studies mention the race of victims and perpetrators

Six out of seven (86%) studies that clearly identify the race of victims find an underreporting of minority victims

Studies finding the underrepresentation of minority victims:	Studies finding no underrepresentation of minority victims:
Hawkins et al 1995	Fedler & Jordan 1996
Johnstone et al 1994	
Pritchard & Hughes 1997	
Romer et al. 1998	
Sorenson et al. 1998	
Weiss & Chermak 1998	

Among studies that document the race of perpetrators, nine out of 12 (75%) find minorities overrepresented

Studies finding minority overrepresentation as perpetrators:	3 studies document no overrepresentation as perpetrators:
Barlow 1995	Fedler & Jordan 1996
Barlow 1998	Rodgers et al. 2000
Dulaney 1969	Sorenson et al. 1998
Gilliam & Iyengar 2000	
Gilliam et al. 1996	
Entman 1990	
Grabe 1999	
Romer et al. 1998	
Weiss & Chermak 1998	

**24 studies mention the race of victims and/or suspects but not all present the data clearly differentiated.*

Invisible Black Victims versus Visible Black Suspects

While many crime stories do not identify race, there is some evidence that newspapers are more likely to identify race in a crime story when an African American is the suspect.[58,59] In nine of 12 (75%) studies, minorities were overrepresented as perpetrators of crime.[60] Six out of seven (86%) studies that clearly identify the race of victims found more attention was paid to White victims than to Black victims.[61] (See Table 1).

Victims. Several studies found that Black victims are less likely to be covered in newspapers than are White victims[62], and one found that newsworthiness increases when the victim is White.[63] Homicides of White victims resulted in more and longer articles than homicides of Black victims.[64] The news media's preference for stories of White homicide victims over Black victims is part of what motivated Sorenson et al. (1998) to coin the term "worthy victim" to describe who gets attention in newspaper stories about homicide. They found that murders of Blacks and Latinos were substantially underreported in the *Los Angeles Times* in a special seven-part series that reported five years of homicides

in the county (1990-1994). For example, they found that 80% of homicide victims in Los Angeles were Black or Hispanic. Yet Blacks were half as likely to be depicted as homicide victims as Whites in the *Los Angeles Times*, and Hispanics were two-thirds as likely to be depicted as homicide victims as Whites. Put another way, when a White person is murdered in Los Angeles, it is three times as likely that there will be a story about it in the *Los Angeles Times* than if the victim is Black. Asians and Whites, conversely, make up 3.8% and 12.9% of victims in Los Angeles. Nearly 9% of homicide victims depicted in the *Los Angeles Times* in Los Angeles were Asian, and fully 20.9% of homicide victims depicted in the *Los Angeles Times* were White. They concluded that the paper's homicide coverage "focused on the 'worthy victim' — the White, youngest and oldest, women, high socioeconomic status, who were killed by strangers."[65] Researcher Mike Males found that the only school shootings not prominently covered during the 1997-99 school years were those involving minority victims (see sidebar).

Perpetrators. The coverage of perpetrators of color is less out of balance than the coverage of victims. Some studies found distinct disparities, while others found perpetrators of color represented in numbers that matched their local arrest rates, but found Whites underrepresented. For example, a study of murder coverage in Indianapolis newspapers found that the percentage of articles about Black suspects reflected the percentage of Blacks arrested for murder (60% and 61%, respectively), but if the suspect was Black, the average article length was longer than for a White suspect.[66]

There are more crimes committed each year than the news media have space to cover. As in all other fields, the media must make choices. The following summary digested from Kids and Guns: How Politicians, Experts, and the Media Fabricate Fear of Youth *(Common Courage Press 2000) by Mike Males, Ph.D., discusses which homicides were and weren't chosen for national coverage.*

From May 1997 to November 1999, in Ventura, California, three affluent suburban adults in their 40's killed 10 people in multiple-victim shootings — six children and four adults. That's more than the combined toll of school shootings in Pearl, Mississippi; West Paducah, Kentucky; and Jonesboro, Arkansas — all in just one county. Yet none of the Ventura grownup shootings made national headlines. All the usual big story ingredients were there: well-off perpetrators killing innocent children in communities where "murder just does not happen." The only big-story ingredient missing: the murderers were not youths.

Consider the dozen mass shootings in the last half of 1999. All involved middle class adults. The toll was 90 casualties: 59 dead (including 21 minors) and 31 wounded. Thus, just 25 weeks of middle-aged mass shootings killed and injured far more people than three years of highly publicized school shootings (Columbine 16; Jonesboro 4; West Paducah 3; Springfield 2; Pearl 2; Mt Morris Township 1). All occurred where "such things are not supposed to happen": professional offices, churches, community centers, upscale hotels, or suburban homes. A few received press attention (e.g. the Atlanta office mass-murder) but the media quickly wearied of the sheer number of middle-aged killings.

Likewise, the news media made choices about coverage even within the category of school shootings. According to the National School Safety Center, from 1997 - 1999, there were 30 school killings that received practically no publicity.

The deaths fell into two categories. Twenty-two involved minority student victims or students of unknown races attending mostly-minority schools. Eight involved white victims — of those, seven involved adult perpetrators, and one student died from an aneurysm after a fist fight with another student.

In the super-charged 1999 school year when the media feverishly awaited any new school shooting, three were virtually ignored. A 14-year-old Elgin, Illinois, teen was shot to death in his classroom in February. Not news: he was Latino and in Special Ed. On June 8, two girls were gunned down in front of their high school in Lynwood, California. Not news (even in the *Los Angeles Times* which ran a modest story on an inside page): they were Latinas. On November 19, a 13-year-old boy shot a 13-year-old girl in a Deming, New Mexico, middle school. Both were also Latinos.

Several of the unheralded school killings had death tolls equaling or exceeding nationally headlined killings. Why then did the news media deem white-suburban-student killings an apocalypse and white adult, minority student and inner-city killings of no import? To ask the question is to answer it: in the crass logic of the newsroom things like that are "supposed to happen" to darker-skinned youth.

RMMW's study of local TV news across the country in 1995 found that 37% of perpetrators on local TV news were Black, 32% were Latino, 27% were White, and 4% were Asian. Whites dominated most other roles on local TV news in the nation that day, comprising 89% of the anchors, 78% of the reporters, 87% of the official sources, and 80% of the victims.[67] Nine months later the numbers were nearly identical.[68]

Close looks at local TV news in a major media market and large urban center found disparities as well. Blacks were 22% more likely to be shown on local TV news in Los Angeles committing violent crime than nonviolent crime, while according to police statistics, Blacks were equally likely to be arrested for violent crime and nonviolent crime. Likewise, Hispanics were 14% more likely to be depicted as committing violent crime than a nonviolent crime, whereas Hispanics were 7% more likely to be arrested for a violent crime than a nonviolent crime.[69] Some might argue that this is simply because violent crime is more newsworthy than non-violent crime. But Whites were 31% more likely to be depicted committing a nonviolent crime than a violent crime, whereas Whites were in fact only 7% more likely to be arrested for a nonviolent crime than a violent crime. Thus, while Blacks and Hispanics were overrepresented as violent offenders, Whites were underrepresented as violent offenders on the evening news. In addition, researchers found that when stories featured a Black perpetrator, reporters included sources hostile to the perpetrator half the time, whereas with White perpetrators, reporters included hostile sources only 25% of the time.[70]

How are African Americans depicted in crime stories? In his extensive work on portrayals of African Americans on local television news[71], Professor Robert Entman documents that Blacks are most likely to be seen in television news stories in the role of criminal, victim, or demanding politician. Black suspects were less likely to be identified by name as were White suspects; were not as well dressed as White suspects on the news; and were more likely to be shown physically restrained than Whites. In sum, Black suspects were routinely depicted as being poor, dangerous, and indistinct from other non-criminal Blacks. He also found that Blacks are more frequently reported in connection with violence, and that Black suspects and their defenders were substantially less likely to speak in the stories than were their White counterparts, reinforcing their absence of individuation.[72]

Are Blacks blamed for crime? Romer et al. (1998) wanted to find out whether the overrepresentation of people of color, especially African Americans, in stories about crime and other problems was simply an accurate reflection of the crime that Blacks committed or the consequence of journalists' interpreting Black crime as intergroup conflict. They posited that if Blacks are shown accused of crimes, but not affected by crime or active in prevention efforts, the blame interpretation would persist in viewers. The authors examined more than 3,000 stories from 14 weeks of local TV news in Philadelphia. They found Blacks overrepresented in crime stories and more likely to be shown as perpetrators in violent and nonviolent crime (though one station had a more balanced portrayal,

Despite much higher rates of Black victimization according to the FBI, White victims are shown at a much higher rate on the news.

with higher rates of Blacks in nonviolent roles). They found Whites represented as victims at a greater rate than as perpetrators, ranging from 30-70%[73], all of which were greater than Whites' rate of victimization according to police statistics in Philadelphia. Despite much higher rates of Black victimization according to the FBI, White victims are shown at a much higher rate on the news. They found that "persons of color are represented in the crime category primarily for their contribution to crime," whereas Whites "are shown primarily for their reaction to and suffering from crime."[74] Romer et al. conclude that these depictions overemphasize the harm people of color inflict on White victims, perpetuate tension between groups, and inhibit cooperation.

Interracial Crime. Our nation has an ugly history of treatment of interracial crime, dating from slavery through the "Jim Crow" era to the well-documented fact that today Blacks have a higher risk of receiving the death penalty for killing Whites than any other victim-offender racial mix.[75] That history is reflected in public opinion polling on race and crime that shows that Whites overestimate their likelihood of being victimized by minorities by three to one.[76] The research we examined found that depictions of interracial crime were emphasized. On local TV news in Philadelphia, four in ten stories about non-White perpetrators depicted a White person as a crime victim, whereas only one in ten homicides with a minority perpetrator actually involved a White victim.[77] Likewise, interethnic homicides were 25% more likely to be reported in the *Los Angeles Times* than their actual occurrence in Los Angeles in 1990-1994.[78] On local television news in Chicago, 76% of Chicago news about Blacks was crime or politics, with stories about Black victimizations of Whites being especially prominent.[79] These findings are disturbing since people of any racial group are far more likely to be killed by someone of the same race.

Contradictory Evidence. The evidence of distorted news portrayals of race and crime is strong, but there are some exceptions. A content analysis of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* did not find African American portrayals limited to stereotyped roles of perpetrator or entertainer.[80] The authors suggest that this may be the result of a heightened awareness by the newspaper staff to combat such stereotypes. Another study found that homicides allegedly committed by Blacks or Hispanics tended to be covered less extensively than homicides allegedly committed by Whites.[81] Another found no significant difference in the depictions of African Americans and Whites in the [Orlando] *Sentinal Star* in news coverage during 1980, though crimes considered newsworthy most often involved African Americans, and so it was those crimes that were more likely to appear in the paper.[82] A reporter told those researchers that racial identification in a crime story "was something I was told to leave out".[83] Finally, researchers conducted a "baseline" content analysis of 1980 newspapers to determine the prominence of coverage of Mexican Americans, their representation, characterization, and whether there is any variability in those depictions.[84] Though Mexican Americans are generally underrepresented in American newspapers, the researchers did not find an overemphasis on crime

In particular, the absence of Black victims, coupled with the repeated presence of Black suspects across different sources of news, reinforces stereotypes about African Americans as a group audiences should fear.

reporting.[85] However, more recent research indicates that Latinos rarely appear in the news, and when they do it is likely to be in stories about crime or immigration.[86]

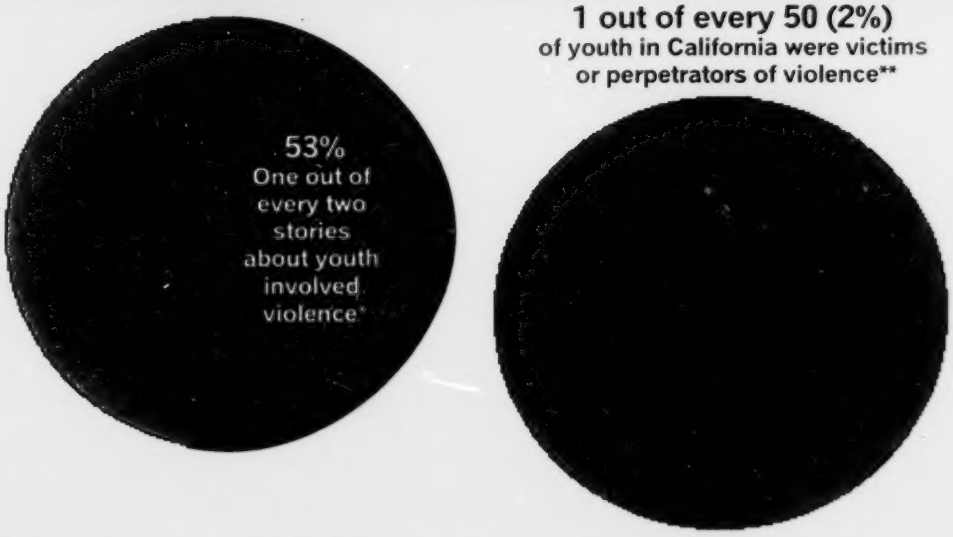
Summary and Implications. Despite some evidence to the contrary, 75% of studies that investigated the race of perpetrators conclude that people of color are disproportionately associated with violent crime as suspects in news stories. Six out of seven studies that examined the race of victims found a consistent under-reporting of people of color as victims of crime. In news coverage, Blacks are most often the perpetrators of violence against Whites and other Blacks, whereas in reality Whites are six times as likely to be homicide victims at the hands of other Whites.[87] Other summaries of content analyses have found that African Americans and Latinos are more often portrayed as criminals and less frequently shown as victims.[88] Consequently, it appears that most Americans are given an erroneous picture of racial violence and who suffers most often from crime, as attested to by public opinion surveys. In particular, the absence of Black victims, coupled with the repeated presence of Black suspects across different sources of news, reinforces stereotypes about African Americans as a group audiences should fear.

Finding #4: Few studies examine portrayals of youth on the news. Those that do find that youth rarely appear in the news, and when they do, it is connected to violence.

There is substantially less research that focuses on portrayals of youth in the news.[89] Though the findings are consistent, there are fewer of them. Of the 146 articles we originally identified, only 16 examined whether and how youth were portrayed on television news or newspapers.[90] Despite the small number of studies, the findings are consistent with the emphasis on violent crime in news coverage generally. Thus, when youth appear in the news, it is often connected to violence. There is also evidence that youth appear in violent contexts, as we might expect since most crime news is violence-related. A few of the studies also parallel the general findings on race and the news. Young people of color seem to fare as poorly as adults on the news — perhaps worse. Finally, some studies find that violence perpetrated by adults upon youth is underreported.

News Involving Youth is Violent. Stories about youth in newspapers and on television news are scarce. When they do appear in the news, youth usually are in stories about education or violence.[91] Relatively few youth are arrested each year for violent crimes, yet the message from the news is that this is a common occurrence. The earliest study we found to focus on youth and crime in the news was an examination of Minnesota newspapers published between July 1, 1975, and June 30, 1976.[92] Overall the study found that images of boys emphasized theft and violence primarily because status offenses were not included in coverage. By failing to report on status offenses, which represent the more common problems facing a greater number of young people, the news picture of youth, like adults, is focused on the more unusual yet far less frequent crimes. As with crime coverage generally, theft and violence committed by youth are more serious than status

Graph 3: One out of every two (53%) local TV news stories concerning children or youth involved violence, while California crime data show that one out of every 50 (2%) young people in California were either victims or perpetrators of violence in 1993


53%
One out of every two stories about youth involved violence*
1 out of every 50 (2%)
of youth in California were victims or perpetrators of violence**

* Dorfman et al 1997. In this study youth included people through age 24.
** Youth arrest data come from the California Department of Criminal Justice's California Criminal Justice Profile 1995. Population data come from the California Department of Finance, Race/Ethnic Population with Age and Sex Detail, 1970 - 2040, 1998. Youth in these data were defined as up to age 18.

offenses. Still, the authors were concerned that the absence of the lesser offenses in the picture means that delinquents "are presented as inevitably bad, and, if left untreated, they will inevitably go wrong."[93]

Studies of how juvenile crime was covered over 10 years in Hawaii's major dailies, The *Honolulu Star Bulletin* and The *Honolulu Advertiser*, showed extreme distortions of juvenile crime.[94] From 1987 to 1996, the newspapers' coverage of juvenile delinquency increased 30-fold. The newspapers' coverage of gangs increased 40-fold; the most frequent type of juvenile crime story reported by the newspapers was "gang activity." This exploding coverage did not simply reflect higher rates of crime and violence among Hawaii's youth. On the contrary, unlike the rest of the country, Hawaii saw its juvenile crime rates decline or remain stable during the same period. The authors conclude that since most Hawaii residents "believe the media do a fairly good job reporting crime news" and news media are the primary source for that news, it appears that many people perceive the nature of juvenile crime in Hawaii to be typified by violent and/or gang-related offenses.[95] In fact, in Hawaii most youth are arrested for less serious offenses such as vandalism, running away from home, drug possession and fighting.[96]

An analysis examining 840 newspaper stories and 109 network news segments in 1993 showed that 40% of all newspaper stories on children were about violence, as were 48% of network television news

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stories.[97] Nominal attention was given to topics of family, health, or economic concerns. There was more overall coverage of crime and violence than of all other policy issues combined. In a later study that examined 3,172 randomly selected stories on youth in one year of the *Los Angeles Times*, *Sacramento Bee*, and *San Francisco Chronicle*, researchers found that the newspapers focused largely on two topics: education and violence. No other topic rated even a third as much attention. Education stories comprised 26% of all stories involving youth. The authors maintain that this is appropriate since the vast majority of youth between the ages of 5 and 17 attend school and about half continue after high school. But violence stories made up 25% of all youth coverage, when only three young people in 100 perpetrate or become victims of violence.[98]

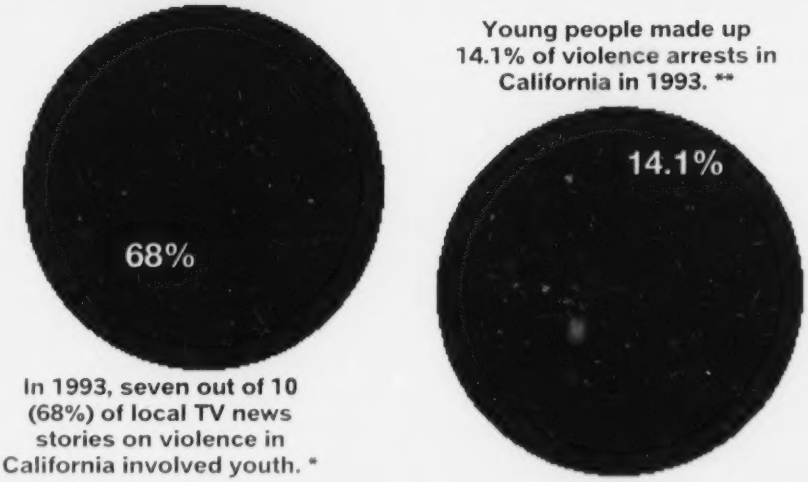
The circumstances in which youth are seen on television news are similar. A study of youth on local television news in 1993 examined 214 hours of local television news broadcast over 11 days on 26 stations throughout California.[99] More than two-thirds of violence stories involved youth while more than half of all stories that included youth involved violence.[100] One out of every two (53%) TV news stories concerning children or youth involved violence, while California crime data show that one out of every 50 (2%) young people in California were either victims or perpetrators of violence in 1993. (See Graph 3.) Nearly seven in 10 news stories (68%) on violence in California involved youth, whereas youth made up 14.1% of violence arrests in California that year.[101] (See Graph 4).

Young people had to perform extraordinary feats to appear on local television news in non-violence-related circumstances. For example, in the fall of 1993, a story ran on local stations across the state on the youngest person to fly solo across the country. Stories about youth accomplishments accounted for 1.2% of the total news time in the study, and these stories rarely featured local young people — most were stories provided to local stations intact via their satellite feed services.

In a more recent study of youth depictions on network and local TV news, researchers found a similar paucity of stories on youth active in community life or achieving success. On local TV news, the top two leading subjects involved youth and violence and the third most frequent topic was accidents, often car crashes.[102] Overall, the researchers found "twice as many discussions of crime and violence as there were of educational issues and student achievement."[103] Among the 9,678 network and local TV stories the researchers analyzed, they found only nine "instances of teens praised for their involvement in community service or humanitarian work, and just six students who were singled out for their exceptional educational achievements."[104]

Once again, it is important to note that some crimes are worse than others. Homicide logically deserves more attention than delinquency or theft. But it is also important to consider the backdrop behind the homicide stories. When it comes to stories about youth, there is little else of consequence in the news. When news coverage about productive,

Graph 4: Seven out of 10 local TV news stories on violence in California involved youth, but young people only made up 14.1% of violent arrests


68%
In 1993, seven out of 10 (68%) of local TV news stories on violence in California involved youth. *
Young people made up 14.1% of violence arrests in California in 1993. **
14.1%

* Dorfman & Woodruff 1998. The study examined 214 hours of local TV news during October-November 1993.
** Youth arrest data come from the California Department of Criminal Justice's California Criminal Justice *Profile*, 1995. Population data come from the California Department of Finance, *Race/Ethnic Population with Age and Sex Detail, 1970-2040*, December 1998.

nonviolent youth are the exception, not the rule, violence fills the void. Audiences without other contact with young people are particularly vulnerable to the perception that youth are violent and out of control. Crime and violence coverage may displace other types of coverage about children and youth, or diminish the importance the public places on children's issues.[105] The bias toward theft and violence may be influencing legislators to enact inappropriate policy as a consequence of believing the underlying messages in the news coverage.[106] Further, when youth crime receives a far larger share of all crime coverage than youths actually commit, and when youth crime coverage dramatically increases while actual youth crime is decreasing, the public that relies on media coverage as its primary source of information about youth crime is misinformed.

Youth of Color Fare Worse than their White Counterparts. The one study that examined youth portrayals in magazines had the most to say about race.[107] A qualitative analysis of all cover stories in *Time* and *Newsweek* between 1946-1995 determined that the term "young Black males" became synonymous with the word "criminal" during the late 1960's when Blacks were struggling for equality. A March 1965 *Newsweek* article was the first to connect crime with Black crime. The first use of "young Black male" in a *Time* or *Newsweek* cover story was in 1970 when *Time* reported that "though

victims of Black crime are overwhelmingly Black, it is chiefly young Black males who commit the most common interracial crime: armed robbery."[108] The author argues that the story cemented the connection by focussing on Washington, DC, which had the highest proportion of Blacks in US cities and high rates of crime. Two years later *Newsweek* made the same connection. In later stories in the 1970's, both *Time* and *Newsweek* portrayed crime as "largely perpetrated by 'young Black males'".[109] Later, Hispanic males were added to the picture. The author suggests that a combination of modern racism[110], media framing, and public discourse of crime as a problem of the Black urban poor has led to the racialization of crime, concluding that, as a consequence of news coverage, any discussion of crime today is essentially a discussion about race.

One study examined the speakers and speaking roles in local TV news stories about youth and violence.[111] The premise was that young people speaking on the news are the images in the stories likely to leave the most lasting impression among audiences.[112] The study found that youth seldom speak for themselves in any story. Although most stories about violence involve youth, the predominant speakers in stories were adults, usually men. However, with every violence-related role in which youth spoke – whether victim or witness of violence, victim or witness of threat, or criminal or suspect – youth of color were represented more often. By contrast, a higher percentage of White youths who spoke were in the role of victims of unintentional injury, a more limited and sympathetic role.

A study of youth crime portrayals in the *New York Times* revealed a similar imbalance. In that study, researchers found Black or Latino youth were never quoted directly while White youth were quoted in all five stories in which they appeared. Furthermore, defense attorneys for White youth were quoted 13 times but only twice for youth of color.[113]

Crime news is where all youth are most likely to be seen on TV news, but youth of color appear in crime news far more often than White youth — 52% and 35%, respectively. White youth were present more often in health or education stories (13%) than were youth of color (2%).[114]

In some cases, reporters may revert to stereotypes when they face language barriers or rely too heavily on one source. For example, in a qualitative analysis of 44 newspaper articles and 18 TV news broadcasts of a hostage-taking incident in a "Good Guys" electronics store, researchers found an emphasis on Asian gangs. The researchers discovered, however, that the young people were not gang members.[115] For most of the news stories, reporters relied heavily on information from law enforcement officers who speculated inaccurately on the youths' gang memberships and the spread of Asian gang activity in other communities.[116]

Youth Victims & Perpetrators. Only a few studies distinguished between youth victims and perpetrators. One found that homicide victims under age 15 received more coverage in the *Los Angeles Times* than would be expected based on the frequency of homicides in that group.[117] Researchers examining the *San Francisco*

Chronicle found more depictions of youth perpetrators than youth victims[118]; this finding concerned the researchers since youth are victims of crime at much higher levels than they are perpetrators of crime. Adults commit 1.5 times more violent crimes against juveniles than juveniles commit against each other; three times more children and youth are murdered by adults than by other juveniles.[119]

There was other evidence that youth perpetrators get more news attention than youth victims. In another examination of the *Los Angeles Times* researchers found that nearly one in four murder suspects (23.9%) whose ages were identified in the *Los Angeles Times* in 1997 were youth, while only one in six homicide arrestees (15.8%) in Los Angeles actually were youth that year.[120] The overrepresentation of youth in homicide reporting occurred despite the fact the adult homicide arrestees killed more victims than their juvenile counterparts.

Violence *Against* Youth is Under-reported. Two studies assessed whether crimes against young people were being covered; both studies found that crimes perpetrated by adults against youth are under-reported.[121] Several other studies that examined depictions of youth in the news generally did not detect substantial coverage on youth as victims of violence.[122]

The relative lack of reporting on violence against youth can be juxtaposed with the over-reporting of homicide by youth as compared to adults. In a comparison of youth portrayals in 327 stories from the 1997 *Los Angeles Times* (Orange County edition) to crime reports from the Los Angeles Police Department, researchers found youth homicides were nearly three times more likely to be reported in the *Los Angeles Times*, despite the fact that adults commit and are victims of far more murders. The authors conclude that the *Times'* misplaced focus scapegoats youth, since they commit far fewer crimes than adults.[123]

Effects on Public Perceptions

A detailed study of the coverage of Denver's "Summer of Violence," provides an opportunity to explore the influence the news media has on the public's perception of youth violence.[124] The study compared coverage of youth homicides in the Denver *Post* during the summer of 1993 to coverage in the summers of 1992 and 1994. The study also provides interviews with journalists, as well as elected officials and criminal justice personnel, to ascertain journalists' motivations and impact on policy making during that watershed period for juvenile justice legislation in Colorado.

The study found that, while youth violence was a growing problem for many years in Denver, the news media shaped and highlighted the problem of youth violence during the "Summer of Violence" by giving high visibility coverage to several youth killings. This brought youth violence to the public's attention, even though homicides by youth in Denver were slightly *higher* in 1991, 1992, and 1994 than in 1993.[125] The Governor called a special session of the legislature that year and the legislature passed several punitive pieces of juvenile justice legislation, many of which had previously been considered and rejected. After the "Summer of Violence" the news media moved on to other issues, and

coverage of juvenile crime subsided dramatically, even though juvenile homicides *increased* the next year, and over the next summer. There was a 168.5% increase in the number of articles about youth crime between the summers of 1992 and 1993, and then a 220% decline in articles about youth crime in the summer of 1994, despite a 17% increase in the youth homicide rate in the summer of 1994 versus the previous summer. Similarly, there were 14 times as many "A" section articles in the summer of 1993 than in the summer of 1992 and four times as many in 1993 as in 1994. More than three times as many column inches were devoted to youth crime in the summer of 1993 as in either 1992 or 1994. Ultimately, the study concludes that it is not data, but news coverage, that galvanizes policy action about youth violence.

The Denver study shows us that heightened news coverage can focus attention and catapult policy action, a typical agenda-setting effect of the news. A second media effect, framing, can also have a profound impact on how news stories are interpreted by the public. Relevant here are experiments researchers have conducted to examine whether television news audiences respond differently to stories that include "mug shots" of alleged youth perpetrators of different races: Anglo, Asian, African American or Hispanic.[126]

In the experiments, audiences were chosen at random in a Los Angeles shopping mall to watch a news broadcast that contained a story with a close-up photo of an alleged murderer who was either a) African American or Hispanic; b) White or Asian; or c) no racial identity. A fourth control group saw a broadcast without a crime story. Researchers found that "a mere five-second exposure to a mug shot of African American and Hispanic youth offenders (in a 15-minute newscast) raises levels of fear among viewers, increases support for 'get tough' crime policies, and promotes racial stereotyping."[127] While the stories with perpetrators of color increase fear among all viewers, White and Asian viewers have an increased desire for harsher punitive policies than African American or Hispanic audiences, who, the authors suggest, are reminded of injustice and prejudice by the crime stories. Thus, the authors argue, when mug shots of African Americans and Latinos are shown, local TV news crime stories expand the divide between racial groups. In a similar experiment, researchers found that students rated Black suspects as more guilty, deserving of punishment, more likely to commit future violence, and less likable than the White suspects, about whom they were given precisely the same information.[128]

Survey research on racial stereotyping and crime helps explain the experimental findings. Researchers have found that when Blacks are placed in a violent context, Whites who hold stereotypical attitudes that consider African Americans generally violent (and lazy) were far more likely to believe that the Blacks were guilty and prone to violence. But the same people did not have the same reaction if Whites were the ones placed in the violent context.[129]

Thus several researchers conclude that a discussion about crime in America is essentially a discussion about race.[130]

Evidence from a later study strongly supports that conclusion, as 60% of the people watching a news story without an image of a perpetrator falsely remembered seeing one, and in 70% of these cases they "remembered" the perpetrator as African American, even though they never saw him.[131]

The findings about race and crime catalogued in this report are eerily similar to research on news depictions of poverty. Martin Gilens compared network television and news magazine portrayals of poverty to who is poor in America, what Americans believe about the poor, and what those editing news photographs believe about the poor. He found that pictures in the news about poor people in America disproportionately feature African Americans, especially when depicting "less sympathetic" poor adults, as opposed to the working poor or the elderly.[132] Gilens concludes that the disproportionate number of Black faces in news images about poverty may exist because network bureau and news magazine photographers largely operate in urban centers, where poor African Americans are more geographically concentrated than poor Whites. When the story assignment comes, photographers go where it will be easiest to take pictures of poor people — inner city African American neighborhoods.[133] "Because poor Blacks are disproportionately available to news photographers," Gilens suggests, "they may be disproportionately represented in the resulting news product."[134]

However, Gilens notes that geographic concentration of African Americans in the inner city and photo editors' own misperceptions of the overall distribution of race and poverty do not explain completely why there is such a preponderance of Blacks in news photos about poverty. Gilens maintains that some combination of photo editors' own conscious or unconscious stereotypes, or their conscious or unconscious "indulgence of what they perceive to be the public's stereotypes" explains the rest.[135] In other words, photo editors choose photos with Black poor people in them because they think their viewers or readers will more easily interpret the photograph as being about poverty. Readers will recognize the familiar image, what they "know" to be true.

Crime news may suffer from similar factors of urban geographic concentration and stereotyping by news editors and reporters. Most youth violence in which youth are the perpetrators occurs in urban centers. In fact, in 1994, 30% of the homicides committed by youth occurred in just four cities — Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, and New York — cities which contained only 5% of America's youth population.[136] In 1997, 94% of counties in America had either one or no juvenile homicides, most of those being rural or suburban counties. Editors and producers may be making choices about which crimes to include that reflect their own internalized understanding of what crime consists of and what their audience cares about: violent Black perpetrators and White victims — the image that is being reinforced by selection choices. In most parts of the country, the primary news audience is White[137], a group that is statistically very unlikely to form their opinions about minority youth crime from personal experience. Those making news selections might assume that viewers and

readers want to hear stories about people like themselves. If the news outlet's audience, or target demographic, is primarily White, then editors and producers may "naturally" (that is, without critical examination) choose stories that feature Whites in sympathetic roles.

Journalists ponder why. There are reasons the coverage looks as it does. One is that crime news is easy — everyone knows what it looks like, how to gather it, and how to report it. Some journalists argue that audiences want news about violence, though most polls dispute that argument. Another reason is that news is a business, and reporters, producers, and editors have learned to choose the news they believe will draw the most attractive audience for advertisers.

The study of Denver's "Summer of Violence" offers some insight into newsroom decision-making about which homicides warrant coverage.[138] After interviewing editors, producers, and reporters, the researcher concludes that, in covering Denver's "Summer of Violence" in 1993, journalists viewed these mostly White, middle class victims killed by minority youth through a predominantly White middle class lens. *Denver Post* reporter Steven Lipscher said, for example:

> Take a look at our editors over there. Take a look at the news editors at the TV stations. Most of them are White middle class. Most of them are men but that doesn't make a whole lot of difference here. They live in these nice middle class neighborhoods and when those neighborhoods start having random crime...and it gets close to the suburbs or even in the suburbs where these news editors live, you know that deeply troubles them. When the crime was centered solely on the inner city if we had minority editors, people who lived in the inner city, we might have covered it. But we didn't and we still don't. Inner city crime is not nearly as shocking as suburban crime and the only reason why is look at who is writing the stories and look at who is assigning the stories.

The White, middle class lens means that some murders are more important than others, as explained by this *Rocky Mountain News* reporter:

> There are homicides and then there are *homicides* on the police beat. There are homicides I can work hard on and only get this much into the paper. And then there are the kind that all you have to do is mention to the editor, "Gotta former district attorney who just killed his wife," and we're all over it...And as a colleague of mine once said, he had this theory that there were misdemeanor murders. That's not a theory I subscribe to, but he had a point. Obviously, there are some murders that don't count as much as others. A misdemeanor homicide according to Tony was typically a drug dealer [who] wipes out another drug dealer in an alley somewhere over a business deal gone bad. That is considered a low interest homicide (Emphasis in original).

Ultimately, individual news workers make decisions about what to include in the news of the day based on whether they personally care about the story. Reporters, editors, and producers have finely honed,

internalized mechanisms that are triggered by their personal values and emotional responses, tempered by news judgement, experience, and expectations of audience response.[139] Standard selection criteria for news stories — controversy, conflict, novelty, proximity, significance, timeliness, visual appeal, practicality — are processed through the personal filters of journalists.[140]

DISCUSSION

There has been concern about the effect of crime reporting on public understanding since long before television. The FBI crime index was created in the 1930's in order to control the public interpretation of crime statistics via the FBI, specifically to avoid "the way the press seemed to manufacture 'crime waves.'"[141] Noncontextual news reports have also been long lamented. Thirty years ago, the Kerner Commission noted that "By failing to portray the Negro as a matter of routine and in the context of the total society, the news media have, we believe, contributed to the Black-White schism in this country."[142]

This analysis tells us that these concerns are still warranted. The studies reviewed here confirm that the news media's cumulative coverage of youth, race and crime misrepresents crime, who suffers from crime, and the real level of involvement of young people in crime. With the consistent underrepresentation of White perpetrators and over-representation of Blacks and Latinos in violent crime stories, local TV news in particular regularly reinforces the erroneous notion that crime is rising, that it is primarily violent, that most criminals are nonwhite, and that most victims are White.

Non-representative portrayals of youth are especially problematic. The fact that violence *against* children and youth is a much larger problem than violence committed *by* youth[143] has gone largely unreported by the news media.

The public relies on news for its knowledge of crime. We suggest that a "misinformation synergy" occurs in crime news that profoundly misinforms the public. The synergy results from the simultaneous and consistent presentation of three significant distortions in print and broadcast news. It is not just that African Americans are overrepresented as criminals and underrepresented as victims, or that young people are overrepresented as criminals, or that violent crime itself is given undue coverage. It is that all three occur together, combining forces to produce a terribly unfair and inaccurate overall image of crime in America. Add to that a majority of readers and viewers who rarely have any personal experience with crime by Black youth, and a White adult population who must rely on the media to tell them that story and we have the perfect recipe for a misinformed public and misguided power structure.

Each study's findings, taken alone, may not be cause for alarm. After all, crime is a serious problem that demands news attention and political action.

But if news audiences are taking the crime coverage at face value, they are accepting a serious distortion. They are likely to believe that most crime is extremely violent and that perpetrators are Black and victims White. If news audiences have little contact with young people, they are

likely to believe that youth are dangerous threats, in part because there are so few other representations of youth in the news to the contrary.

As noted in the Introduction to this report, the public believes just that. Seventy-six percent of Americans say they get their opinions about crime from the news.[144] A 1998 poll found that nearly two-thirds (62%) of the public believes that juvenile crime is on the increase,[145] even though there has been a 56% decline in homicides by youth between 1993 and 1998[146] and the National Crime Victimization Survey reports youth crime at its lowest since that survey began (1973). Rather than informing citizens about their world, the news is reinforcing stereotypes that inhibit society's ability to respond effectively to the problem of crime, particularly juvenile crime.

Journalists, too, are among the largest consumers of news. If the picture is distorted, it affects them as well. Reporters, editors, and producers making selections about what to cover are completely saturated by the images in their own storytelling. It appears that they have come to believe that the images they present on their pages and over the air reflect the world accurately.[147]

Since every news outlet can't cover every crime, the question then becomes, how should reporters choose which crimes to cover? How can the overall picture be made more accurate? How can print and broadcast journalists make choices that minimize the distortions documented by researchers since 1910? How can their cumulative choices better reflect the crime and violence they cover? And when they make those choices, how can the media add more context to crime coverage so as to improve the viewers' understanding of the causes and solutions to violent crime?

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NEWS MEDIA

The overwhelming evidence is that in the aggregate, crime coverage is not reflecting an accurate picture of who the victims and perpetrators are. The most consistent finding across media and across time is the gross distortion of the types of crime reported in the news. Rather than informing citizens about their world, the news is reinforcing stereotypes that inhibit society's ability to respond to the problem of crime, including juvenile crime. This is an admittedly difficult problem to fix, given the many constraints of daily journalism. Nonetheless, it is way past time to try to create a more accurate overall picture of crime, who suffers from it, and what can be done to prevent it. To begin to address this dilemma, we suggest that reporters, editors, and producers expand their sources; provide context for crime news; increase enterprise and investigative journalism; balance stories about crime and youth with stories about youth generally; conduct and discuss content audits of their own news; and examine the story selection process, adjusting if necessary.

Expand Sources

Reporters depend primarily on law enforcement or criminal justice sources for crime news. Several studies document the danger of limiting sources to criminal justice and police departments. Numerous analyses we examined show the

misrepresentation that can occur when police statistics are reported unquestioned.[148] Asian, Latino and Hawaiian youth, these studies found, were cast in stereotypical roles that did not reflect the population of youth, and misrepresented the level of gang activity. The lack of other non-violence-related portrayals of youth exacerbates this problem.

The dependence on traditional police sources hampers the full story on crime in at least two ways. First, the police benefit from some control over public understanding of crime statistics. Depending on the temper of the times, if they can show an increase in crime, they have reason for higher budgets. If they show crimes being addressed, they can engender public support. When efforts are made to count, the numbers go up, which may simply reflect unrecognized instances from before or a redefinition of old crime patterns to the new "countable" — and fundable — category.

This phenomenon was well-documented by Fishman (1980), who tracked a manufactured "crime wave" against the elderly that was created in part because the main source for information was law enforcement. After local police created a task force on crimes against the elderly, journalists tuned in, and were subsequently primed for stories on crime against the elderly. Fishman witnessed a process whereby news workers in a local television newsroom "manufactured" a crime wave by continuing to report on crimes against the elderly despite police statistics that showed an overall decrease in those crimes compared to the previous year. The close relationship between police and reporters propelled crimes against the elderly to the top of the media agenda. All of this means the journalists' role as watchdog over public institutions and their ability to check police activity against other sources is important. They can only do that well if they have a good familiarity with sources other than law enforcement.

Second, police look good when the focus is on violent crime because they have a better record of solving homicide and sexual assault than they do with property crimes.[149] For example, researchers found a 200% increase in crime prevention stories between 1980 and 1985 in Louisiana newspapers, mostly covering "Crime Stoppers" and "Neighborhood Watch" programs.[150] They note the mutual interest police and reporters have in reporting like this. The police benefit from public acknowledgment of their work to prevent crime; reporters benefit by maintaining good relationships through such stories with police, whose access to crime information they need if they are to report breaking news.

A good example of journalists' ability to expand sources occurred in the coverage of the shootings at Columbine High School. While official police reports were included in the Columbine coverage, the news media reached beyond law enforcement for interpretation and explanation.[151] In the 12-month period prior to the Columbine shooting, criminal justice sources were quoted in 77% of stories; in the Columbine coverage they were sources in 45% of stories. In the Columbine coverage, the number of sources per story increased as we heard more from witnesses, independent experts, issue advocates, politicians, and

youth themselves.[152] The same questions journalists sought to answer after Columbine — How could something like this happen? What can we do to prevent it? — Can also be asked of a wider range of sources when more common violence happens locally.

Reporters should not cease using the police as sources for crime stories, but that should not be the only place they look. Some media researchers suggested that news organizations use interns to routinely query other sources for news, just as they do now with "beat checks," the calls made routinely to police stations.[153] Law enforcement perspectives limit the questions a reporter might pursue. Most crime beats are focused on cops and courts and the details of a specific event. Reporters are focused on what happened, and whether the perpetrators have been apprehended. Community-based sources, public health departments, and others have data and information that can balance a law-enforcement-only approach. For example, hospital admission data, though not always available for a breaking story, can help reporters put crime and its consequences in perspective. Health departments and coroner's offices are good sources of homicide data. Other social agency employees and community residents can have information about neighborhood life pertinent to crime stories. Reporters need to cultivate these sources the same way they cultivate the local beat cops.

Provide Context for Crime News in Regular Reporting

Robert Entman suggests that local television attention to crime is a function of news workers' need to appeal to a wide audience that crosses political jurisdictions. TV uses violent crime stories to arouse emotions rather than presenting analyses to help people deliberate local policy choices because emotional reactions are the same across political boundaries, though policy may be different.[154] Thus reporters are drawn to homicide because everyone in their audience can appreciate the drama. But interpreting violence narrowly in terms of homicide, and interpreting homicide in terms of personal altercations or failure of restraint misses the larger story of violence. For example, in a study provocatively titled, "Violence in American cities: Young Black males is the answer, but what was the question?," racial differences for homicides disappeared when researchers controlled for "marginal urban landscapes," defined specifically as proximity to LULU's (Locally Unwanted Land Uses, such as waste incinerators, landfills, airports, refineries, etc.) and TOADS (Temporarily Obsolete Abandoned Derelict Sites, such as deserted factories, power plants, mines, vacant garbage-strewn lots, etc.).[155] Local disintegration is the key risk factor for violent death, not age or race.[156]

Certainly excellent reporting on this issue has been done[157], but in general, the studies here confirm that it is the drama of single crimes that is regularly made vivid, not the links to larger social and physical environments and precursors.

By context we do not mean the particular details of an individual crime (the "blood-soaked shirt" and the like). Instead we are referring to the relationship of the single incident to the larger social fabric, be that neighborhood conditions, the risk factors for violence, or crime rates — all the things that help explain the status of crime, race and youth. The challenge is to add the social context to the storytelling and give audiences some guideposts for interpreting the crime.

For example, no reporter would investigate a car crash scene, late at night, and not ask whether the driver or passengers had been drinking. It is an appropriate question because alcohol is a known risk factor for vehicle crashes. But alcohol contributes to homicide at almost precisely the same rate it contributes to fatal car crashes — 32% and 33% respectively.[158] If it make sense to ask the question, "Was alcohol involved?" At the scene of a crash, it makes sense to ask it at the scene of a crime. Questions generated from the risk factor research on violence can help crime beat reporters ask better questions. Then they could link specific crimes to larger issues and prevention. For more than 15 years, epidemiologists have been identifying violence risk factors, including the availability of firearms and alcohol, racial discrimination, unemployment, violence in the media, lack of education, abuse as a child, witnessing violent acts in the home or neighborhood, isolation of the nuclear family, and belief in male dominance over females.[159]

Another explanation print and broadcast journalists could offer for the picture of crime reported here is that they focus on the unusual — that the unusual is what, in fact, makes the crime stories newsworthy. While this might be true, it does not explain the absence of context that would help citizens understand how to interpret the rare event. In other areas of reporting, integrating context is expected. In almost every area of a newspaper or broadcast — sports, business, politics, entertainment — general information is integrated with spot news and events are made sense of for audiences by placing them in a larger context, if not in the same article, then with additional graphics or sidebars or standing reports. With every other topic, newspapers are including information that depicts the status of issues, along with the unusual events.[160] Stories on crime and youth could be treated with equal depth and breadth.

There is some evidence that including context as we've defined it here makes a difference to news consumers. In a 1993 experiment, researchers found that when accidents were reported with more attention to the "causal chain of events, described in the human context of antecedents and aftermath, and weekly accounts of local accident statistics were given (including date, location and severity)," then newspaper readers' had a better understanding overall of accidents' relationship to other community issues.[161]

An excellent example of providing context occurred with the *Washington Post's* coverage of a 2000 shooting in Mt. Morris Township, Michigan, of a six-year-old girl by a six-year-old boy. To be sure, the *Post* covered the tragedy, as did most papers, the day it occurred. But four weeks later, the *Post* ran an extensive, front page

article on the factors that contributed to the boy's involvement in the shooting, including the impoverished neighborhood he lived in, his ready access to guns, and the neglect he received at the hands of his drug-involved caretakers — all factors which are highly associated with violence.[162] Other reports connected the consequences of welfare reform to the incident, since the boy's mother had been forced back to work despite the lack of adequate child care arrangements for her son.[163]

Providing context means that news organizations must reinvest in the practice of journalism. Resources must be available so that journalists can do the work to understand the landscape of violence in the region they cover. Reporters need time to cultivate relationships with key sources, get to know neighborhoods, and do "gumshoe" journalism. It takes much more work, and time, on the part of reporters to draw out the drama in those stories and connect them meaningfully to the larger context. News organizations need to support this time, which leads to our next recommendation.

Bolster Enterprise and Increase Investigative Journalism

Reporting the unusual is of interest to reporters and the population at large. But a news focus almost exclusively on the unusual has detrimental consequences. First, to the uninitiated news consumer, those unaware that reporters and editors make a series of choices about what goes into the newspaper or TV broadcast, the regular diet of unusual over time seems usual. If the only information people receive about crime, violence, and youth is from the news, it is not surprising that they would think the world is an increasingly dangerous place, and that African Americans are more likely to victimize Whites than are other Whites. If the few studies of youth in the news are correct, the public learns that young people are more violent than ever before, that most youth are violent, and that people under age 18 commit almost as much violent crime as adults do. Yet none of these conclusions is true.

Instead, reporters should be telling stories about typical events, and telling them with more depth. Continuous coverage of rare events, even with a disclaimer alerting news consumers about the rarity, is not sufficient.

The remedy is enterprise journalism. Enterprise journalism means reporters don't work from news releases or police scanners, but get out from behind their desks, into the community, where a variety of sources and perspectives can be reported. Reporters can then do the digging to find true exemplars of real trends, rather than chasing the easy, but rare, high profile event.[164] They can enlist organizations such as the National Institute for Computer-assisted Reporting which can help with collection and analysis of trend data. Then they will know what they are looking for, and be able to recognize a potentially newsworthy event — newsworthy because it is a good example of the real problems the region faces, not because it is rare. News producers hope their audiences will connect with the human drama of the story, and the human drama exists in the routine violence as well as the unusual. It simply requires good reporting to uncover that drama.

Investigative journalism — digging deeper, over longer periods of time — can help uncover important stories and explain new trends. It holds the potential to reveal juvenile crime stories that have gone completely unnoticed by the general public. For example, in its award-winning series on abuses at the state's boot camps, the *Baltimore Sun* awoke state leaders and citizens to abuses at the camps and lax after care of delinquent youth upon release. The result — five top juvenile justice officials lost their jobs, the boot camps were permanently closed, and the Department of Juvenile Justice received its largest single-year budget increase in history.

Balance Stories about Crime and Youth with Stories about Youth in General

News organizations must pull back their lens to get a broader picture of what else young people are doing. When it comes to youth, violence is as prominent in the news as education.[165] Portraying the two subjects nearly equally exaggerates the rate of violence and gives short shrift to education, particularly since 52 million young people go to school but only 125,000 are arrested for violent crimes each year. What issues affect them? What other newsworthy activities are they engaged in? Without such coverage to balance reporting on crime and violence, the public sees a narrow, inaccurate reflection of youth.

Journalists themselves are reaching this conclusion. In an extensive article on how youth are covered in newspapers, *Los Angeles Times* reporter David Shaw documented similar critiques — and self-critiques — from journalists around the country. Experts on children and journalists themselves noted that children's issues are undercovered and audiences underserved as a consequence. "Traditionally," writes Shaw, "most children have been in the news only when they've done something bad or when others have done bad things to them. Even though most kids don't fit into either category, this coverage can adversely — and unfairly — influence public perceptions and public policies that affect children, especially teenagers."[166]

To remedy this, some news organizations have created special beats to cover children and youth. Organizations like the Casey Journalism Center for Children, Youth, and Families at the University of Maryland provide training for reporters and editors on key issues. NewsLab, a project affiliated with the Project for Excellence in Journalism, provides suggestions for reporters who want to bring more substance and better storytelling to local TV news. And, young people themselves have made reasonable suggestions that would result in more comprehensive coverage. In San Francisco, the UNYTE Youth Team, after careful study of youth depictions in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, suggested that the news media could balance crime coverage of youth by:

1. presenting news reports about youth crime in proportion to crime that youth commit;
2. producing in-depth stories that connect the conditions and underlying causes for crime among youth;
3. hiring youth reporters for youth issues and soliciting youth commentaries for editorial pages;

4. linking the consequences of policy decisions to conditions and events involving youth (e.g., critically examine the effectiveness of incarceration policies);
5. reporting on the link between poverty and violence; and
6. involving young people in monitoring their coverage of youth.[167]

Heeding this advice may have the added value of attracting younger audiences to the news.

Conduct Internal Audits of the News

Print and broadcast journalists can compare their outlet's news reports to actual trends in the region they cover. What are the data on race, age, and gender in relation to violence? Based on the news, would regular readers and viewers see an overall distorted picture of crime, race, and youth? News organizations can and should examine and publish their own statistics on the race, age and gender of offenders and victims they report on and let readers and viewers know how that compares to other indi-cators from criminal justice or public health sources. Such analyses can foster productive newsroom discussion and spawn mechanisms for correcting the cumulative distortion of story choices. Publishing the analyses can also educate audiences to be better consumers of the news.

When a newspaper pays attention to how it portrays a group or an issue, and makes a concerted effort to change, it can end up with a better news product. For example, the *Los Angeles Times* succeeded in expanding the roles in which Latinos appeared in the paper after careful content analysis and in-depth discussion in the newsroom.[168] Using an innovative newspaper content analysis, reporters and editors were able to identify serious limitations in the way Latinos appeared in the paper. The research helped reporters and editors understand the deficiencies of their own reporting, and the paper was willing to hire a special group of reporters to focus on Latinos in Los Angeles. The results from the *Times* are promising. After months of work, Latinos now appear in the paper more frequently and in a greater diversity of roles, rather than being concentrated in low-income or criminal depictions as they were previously.

Examine the Selection Process, and Exercise Restraint When Necessary

Sometimes, the news media should not cover certain stories, or not cover them prominently, because they inflame but do not inform. Of course, news outlets cannot stop telling unusual stories, but they need not tell every one, thereby overwhelming readers and viewers with a cumulative misrepresentation, especially when it means there is not room for less sensational but more important news.

Some news organizations have already begun to apply criteria for story selection, like KVUE-TV in Austin, Texas, which does not air crime stories unless they meet one of the following five criteria:

1. Does action need to be taken?
2. Is there an immediate threat to safety?
3. Is there a threat to children?
4. Does the crime have significant community impact?
5. Does the story lend itself to a crime prevention effort?

If reporters limit themselves to reporting what just happened without considering how that crime fits into larger patterns, the news is doomed to be distorted

KVUE-TV applied these criteria and remained the top-rated news program in its market. Following the shooting in Springfield, Oregon, the *Chicago Sun-Times* editorialized that it would no longer cover out-of-state shootings on its front page out of concern that the prevalence of such shootings was being exaggerated and would frighten children. The *New York Times*' coverage of the shooting in Mt. Morris Township, Michigan on March 1, 2000, ran on page A14, given equivalent space and prominence with a study on racial disparities in school suspensions.

Who Gets Attention in the Newsroom?

Is perceived victim "worthiness"[169] the unspoken criteria for whether a murder is selected for the news? Reporters should ask themselves: Who qualifies as a worthy victim in my newsroom? Who doesn't? By making these criteria explicit and sharing decisions with readers and viewers, reporters will give them some indication of what they are choosing from, what the field of possibilities is on a given day or in a given week.

If reporters limit themselves to reporting what just happened without considering how that crime fits into larger patterns, the news is doomed to be distorted. The best reporters can do in that situation is say, "This is unusual." However, in the absence of a picture of the usual, the repeated image of unusual crimes will fill the void. One way out of this trap is to be sure the newspaper, magazine, or broadcast turns as much attention — or at least some — to the usual victims and perpetrators of crime. If, for example, domestic violence is a frequent type of assault in the area the outlet covers, or if child abuse is a frequent cause of death for young people, journalists should report on that at least as frequently as other types of assaults or homicides.

The special case of race. In particular, reporters should ask themselves whether the race of the victim or suspect determines whether a story gets reported. One researcher noted that a Chicago newspaper reporter told him that "his newspaper considered news of Negro crime to be 'cheap news'," especially when both the victim and suspect were Black.[170] In another study, four White reporters interviewed believed race played no role in story selection, while the Black reporter who was interviewed believed race did play a role.[171] All the reporters interviewed equated race with location (inner city versus suburbs).

Editors and producers may choose to give space to certain crimes over others because of who in their audience is affected. Writing in *Editor & Publisher*, veteran journalist Nat Hentoff suggested that we don't see much reporting of victims of color because "too many newspapers treat such crimes as so 'routine' as to be not worth the space to report on them."[172] The research reviewed here reveals a more complicated picture: It's not just that victims of color are less visible, but also that suspects of color are more vividly depicted.
Race has powerful salience in news and is worth special attention in newsrooms. Discussion about crime and race among journalists has primarily been centered around whether or not racial identifiers are appropriate in stories describing suspects.[173] Recommendations have included being sure the racial reference is

relevant, explaining that relevance, avoiding euphemistic adjectives (e.g., "inner city"), using racial identifiers only when they add value to the story, and being informed generally about people of races other than one's own.[174]

There is some evidence that news consumers remember more about what they see than what they hear.[175] Iyengar, for example, found that TV news viewers were more likely to attribute responsibility for fixing problems to government and institutions after they watched TV news stories that included contextualizing information, except when the story focused on an African American.[176] In that case, viewers attributed responsibility for fixing the problem to the victim. Race trumps everything else in news stories as viewers revert to demeaning and inaccurate stereotypes. Gilliam and Iyengar refer to this as the "crime script", the expected sequence of events from which news consumers derive meaning and draw conclusions based on their experience with previous or similar events. When it comes to crime, they argue, television news has taught viewers that the pattern to expect is "crime is violent, and criminal behavior is associated with race/ethnicity."[177]

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHILD ADVOCATES, YOUTH GROUPS AND CIVIL RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS

While most of this report and these recommendations have focused on what the news media can and should do to improve crime coverage, there is much that juvenile justice advocates can do to help generate a fairer depiction of youth crime. Journalists make the ultimate decisions about what stories will be told and how the information will be conveyed. But journalists rely on their sources for information, verification, and explanation. If those with the most information about and access to young people refuse to talk with journalists, the picture of youth on the news will be incomplete. We recommend that advocates build relationships with journalists, talk to them about their coverage, and help them get the information they need to do more complete stories, be it hard data or young people to interview.

Work With Reporters To Give A More Accurate Picture

Because of the juvenile justice system's historic confidentiality protections, many child advocates refuse to talk to reporters about the context of individual cases. This places a serious and sometimes insurmountable burden on reporters when they try to tell a more complete story. It can also result in monolithic depictions of young people as criminals whose delinquency is presented without important contributing antecedents.

Over the past decade, 43 states have diminished confidentiality protections, so that the news media now have unprecedented access to information about delinquency proceedings. Defense attorneys and child advocates must learn new ways to work with members of the news media to allow a fuller story to be told about troubled young people, without abandoning confidentiality protections. Over the past year, conferences held by the American Bar Association's National

Juvenile Defender Center and the National Legal Aid And Defender Association have sought creative ways to do just that. Other resources are available for advocates interested in better understanding the constraints of the news business and improving their skills in communicating with reporters.[178]

Engage Reporters, Editors, and Producers In Dialogue About Their Coverage

Child advocates, youth groups and civil rights groups need to begin to engage news outlets as consumers to educate the news media about their needs and to jointly seek solutions to the complex issues raised in this and other reports about coverage of youth crime. We Interrupt This Message, an advocacy group that conducted two of the studies discussed in this report, took its findings on disproportionate youth crime portrayals directly to the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *New York Times*. In 2000, Suffolk University's law school held a forum which brought together reporters from the *Boston Globe*, the *Boston Herald*, and several electronic media with lawyers and community groups that work with young people for a productive exchange of ideas about coverage of youth crime. In recent years, civil rights groups like the NAACP and the National Council of La Raza have highlighted the scarcity of minority representation on network programming. For example, in 1999 the NAACP highlighted the lack of prominent characters on the new fall television lineup, prompting an immediate response by the networks to diversify their programming. Although the NAACP's efforts concerned entertainment media, similar efforts to educate news media about depictions of minority offenders and victims may also be well received.

Make Data Available

Journalists need local data to make national problems relevant for their audiences. Share information with journalists so they can learn about local patterns, incorporate that information into daily stories, and give citizens the information they need to make better decisions about violence prevention policy.

Prepare Young People To Speak for Themselves, and Let Them Do So.

Youth are becoming involved in advocacy efforts about juvenile justice and violence prevention from coast to coast. Give young people the training and support they need to speak confidently about the work they are doing to improve their communities for themselves and others. Increasing the visibility of young people in the news will help balance the current picture. Create situations where young people can interact with journalists so they can begin establishing themselves as sources on their own.

Make Yourself Available to Reporters

Youth advocates and researchers cannot have an impact on the coverage of youth crime if journalists don't know they exist, if they cannot find spokespeople when they need them, or if advocates do not respond to their requests for information in a timely manner. Sometimes, this will be difficult, because breaking stories

about youth crime do not always arise at convenient times. But advocates' availability as experts or alternative voices prior to deadline can help shape coverage and put violence among youth into its proper context.

CONCLUSION

If the public and policy makers have internalized a distorted picture of crime, race, and youth from the news, journalists are likely to have done so as well. After all, journalists consume more news than anyone. A quick trip to any newsroom makes that instantly clear: Twenty-four hours a day journalists are under pressure to be aware of current news or anything that might become news. To meet the pressure, news organizations stay tuned in to each other, via the wire services, radio, print, or TV, which is available in newsrooms overhead and in every direction. News organizations watch each other closely, and mimic each other's news. Unfortunately, many of them are repeating a terrible distortion. In whatever way they can, reporters have to break through complacency and question their own news and news gathering habits. When it comes to young people, race, and crime, readers and viewers require a more complete accounting of what is happening to whom. Without print and broadcast journalists' better efforts, the public will never know enough about why violence happens, what is happening to prevent it, and what, as a society, we should do next.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRINT & BROADCAST JOURNALISTS

1. Expand sources beyond police and courts.
Health departments and coroner's offices are good sources of homicide data. Hospital admission data, though not always available for a breaking story, can help reporters put crime and its consequences in perspective. Other social agency employees and community residents have information about neighborhood life pertinent to crime stories. Reporters need to cultivate these sources the same way they cultivate the local beat cops.

2. Provide context for crime in regular reporting.
In almost every area of news — sports, business, politics, entertainment — general information is integrated with spot reports and the news makes sense of events for audiences by placing them in a larger context, if not in the same article, then with additional graphics or sidebars or standing reports. Stories on crime and youth could be treated with equal depth and breadth.

3. Bolster enterprise and increase investigative journalism.
This recommendation requires adequate investment in the practice of journalism. Reporters need the time and resources to cultivate sources, investigate leads, and identify the connections between seemingly isolated events. They need support for understanding the patterns in a community so that they recognize when an event is important *and* interesting, not just interesting.

4. Balance stories about crime and youth with stories about youth in general.
News organizations must pull back their lens to get a broader picture of what else young people are doing. When it comes to youth, violence is as prominent in the news as education. This exaggerates the rate of violence, particularly since 52 million young people go to school but only 125,000 are arrested for violent crimes each year. What issues affect them? What other newsworthy activities are they engaged in?

5. Conduct periodic audits of news content and share the results with readers and viewers.
Newspapers and television newsrooms should periodically pause to examine their content. An audit would look beyond the evening ratings and sales numbers to ask the question: If the only information our readers and viewers got was from our news, what would they know about youth and violence? What wouldn't they know? Assess whether the news gives readers and viewers enough information to deliberate their community's problems.

6. Examine the story selection process, and use restraint when necessary.
Who qualifies as newsworthy in the newsroom? Who doesn't? Of course, news outlets cannot stop telling unusual stories, but they need not tell every one, thereby overwhelming readers and viewers with a cumulative misrepresentation, especially when it means there is not room for less sensational but more important news. Is perceived victim "worthiness" the unspoken criteria for whether a murder is selected for the news? Reporters should ask themselves: Who qualifies as a worthy victim in my newsroom? Who doesn't? If reporters limit themselves to reporting what just happened without considering how that crime fits into larger patterns, the news is doomed to be distorted.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHILD ADVOCATES, YOUTH GROUPS AND CIVIL RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS

1. Work With Reporters To Give A More Accurate Picture.
Because of the juvenile justice system's historic confidentiality protections, many child advocates refuse to talk to reporters about the context of individual cases. This places a serious and sometimes insurmountable burden on reporters when they try to tell a more complete story. Child advocates and lawyers must develop more creative ways to tell a more contextual story about youth crime without jeopardizing their clients' confidentiality.

2. Engage Reporters, Editors, and Producers In Dialogue About Their Coverage.
Child advocates, youth groups and civil rights groups need to begin to engage news outlets as consumers to educate the news media about their needs and to jointly seek solutions to the complex issues raised in this and other reports about coverage of youth crime. We Interrupt This Message, an advocacy group that conducted two of the studies discussed in this report, took its findings on disproportionate youth crime portrayals directly to the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *New York Times*. In 2000, Suffolk University's law school held a forum which brought together reporters from the *Boston Globe*, the *Boston Herald*, and several electronic media with lawyers and community groups that work with young people for a productive exchange of ideas about coverage of youth crime. In recent years, civil rights groups like the NAACP and the National Council of La Raza have highlighted the scarcity of minority representation on network programming. For example, in 1999 the NAACP highlighted the lack of prominent characters on the new fall television lineup, prompting an immediate response by the networks to diversify their programming. Although the NAACP's efforts concerned entertainment media, similar efforts to educate news media about depictions of minority offenders and victims may also be well received.

3. Make Data Available.
Journalists need local data to make national problems relevant for their audiences. Share information with journalists so they can learn about local patterns, incorporate that information into daily stories, and give citizens the information they need to make better decisions about juvenile justice policy.

4. Prepare Young People To Speak for Themselves, and Let Them Do So.
Give young people the training they need to speak confidently about the work they are doing to improve their communities for themselves and others. Create situations where young people can interact with journalists so they can begin establishing themselves as sources on their own.

5. Make Yourself Available to Reporters.
Youth advocates and researchers cannot have an impact on the coverage of youth crime if journalists don't know they exist, if they cannot find spokespeople when they need them, or if advovcates do not respond to their requests for information in a timely manner. Advocates' availability as experts or alternative voices prior to deadline can help shape coverage and put violence among youth into its proper context.

ENDNOTES

1 Males & Macallair 2000
2 Jones & Yamagata 2000
3 Juszkiewicz 2000
4 US OJJDP 1999
5 Pope & Feyerherm 1995
6 Bridges & Steen 1998
7 The National Crime Victimization Survey is an annual survey of over 40,000 Americans inquiring about victimizations they have experienced in the previous year. It is generally considered highly reliable by criminologists because, unlike the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports, it does not rely only on crimes that become known to police, and therefore is less affected by differential rates of citizen reporting over time.
8 Belden, Russonello & Stewart, 1999
9 Brooks, Schiraldi, & Ziedenberg 1999.
10 When asked "Who commits most of the violent crime these days?" 60 percent of respondents chose young people (Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin and Associates and the Tarrance Group, conducted for The California Wellness Foundation, May 1996). In California in 1996, juveniles made up 13% of the state's violent arrests, according to the California Attorney General's Office.
11 Males & Macallair 1999
12 Snyder & Sickmund 1999
13 Updegrave 1994
14 Lippmann [1922]1965
15 ABC News 1996
16 Braxton 1997
17 Farkas & Duffet 1998
18 quoted in Farkas & Duffet 1998
19 cf. McCombs & Shaw 1993
20 Snyder & Sickmund 1999
21 see Oliver 1994
22 Though we did our best to make the database search exhaustive, there is no way to ensure that 100% of relevant studies were captured in our search. The authors would appreciate any information on published studies that are not referenced in this report.
23 Local law enforcement statistics cited in this report include data from the Chicago Police Department and the California Department of Criminal Justice.
24 We found no studies of crime on radio news.
25 Sheley & Askins 1981
26 We did not include studies published in languages other than English or about news distributed outside the US However, several studies turned up in our literature review that indicate the patterns in other countries are similar to the findings described here (c.f. Williams and Dickinson 1993). Fishman and Weimann (1985), the only study we found with a detailed examination of crime and gender on the news, investigated how women and criminality were portrayed in the major Israeli daily newspapers. They found that gender depictions vary with different crimes, and when stereotypes about gender roles are violated, news reports use lenient language that treats female victims as "exceptional," perhaps reinforcing stereotypes about aggression in women and men.
27 Subervi-Vélez 1999
28 Chavez and Dorfman 1996-7
29 Vargas and dePyssler 1999
30 Turk et al. 1989
31 Dorfman et al. 1997; Gilliam et al. 1996; Klite 1998a, 1998b, 1995b; Bliss 1994; Romer et al. 1998
32 Center for Media & Public Affairs 1999, 1997a, 1997b, 1997c, 1996, 1995; Dominick 1978
33 Grabe 1999, Barlow 1995, Windhauser et al. 1990
34 Antunes and Hurley 1977
35 Davis 1952
36 Sheley and Ashkins 1981
37 Chermak 1998
38 Johnstone et al. 1994
39 Sorenson et al. 1998
40 Sorenson et al. 1998
41 Gilliam et al. 1996:10

42 Barlow et al. 1995
43 Center for Media & Public Affairs 2000a
44 Center for Media & Public Affairs 2001
45 Klite 1998a, 1998b, 1995a, 1995b
46 Kaiser Family Foundation 1998
47 Barlow 1995
48 US Department of Justice 1999
49 US Department of Justice 1999
50 Braxton 1997
51 Krajicek 1998:42
52 Bliss 1994, Dorfman et al. 1997, Dorfman & Woodruff 1998, Fenton 1910, McGill N.D., McManus & Dorfman 2000, Perrone & Chesney-Lind 1997
53 Barlow 1998
54 US National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders 1968
55 Klite 1995c:4
56 Romer et al. 1998
57 See the University of Missouri School of Journalism's *Guide to Research on Race and the News* for a comprehensive catalogue of all aspects of research on race and the news (beyond the crime and violence category).
58 Dulaney 1969
59 DeLouth & Woods (1996) found that when suspects were from an ethnic minority group, disclosure of the victim's ethnicity (most often White) was more common. However, the authors cautioned that their numbers were too small to be conclusive.
60 Barlow 1995, 1998; Dulaney 1969; Gilliam & Iyengar 2000; Gilliam et al. 1996; Entman 1990; Grabe 1999; Romer et al. 1998; and Weiss and Chermak 1998 all found minority overrepresentation of perpetrators; Fedler and Jordan 1996; Rodgers et al. 2000, and Sorenson et al 1998 found no overrepresentation of minority perpetrators.
61 Hawkins et al. 1995, Johnstone et al. 1994, Pritchard & Hughes 1997, Romer et al. 1998, Sorenson et al. 1998, and Weiss & Chermak 1998 all found Black victimization underreported compared to Whites; only Fedler & Jordan 1996 found no disparity.
62 Romer et al. 1998, Smith 1991, Johnstone et al. 1994, Sorenson et al. 1998
63 Pritchard & Hughes 1997
64 Weiss & Chermak 1998
65 Sorenson et al. 1998:1514. Note: Sorenson et al. controlled for the overwhelming frequency of stories about the O.J. Simpson murder trial by counting all Simpson stories as one.
66 Weiss & Chermak 1998
67 Klite 1995a
68 Klite 1995b
69 Gilliam et al. 1996
70 Gilliam et al. 1996
71 Entman 1990, 1992, 1994a
72 Entman 1992
73 Romer et al. 1998:296
74 Romer et al. 1998:298-9
75 USGAO 1990
76 Updegrave 1994
77 Romer et al. 1998 NOTE: Romer et al. used the FBI rate for homicides to compare to the vicitimization in crime stories (not just homicide stories). Their comparison is not exactly parallel, but we have included it here because homicides dominate media crime coverage, and because in other categories of crime Whites are more likely to be victimized by other Whites, though at a lower ratio than for homicide.
78 Sorenson, et al. 1998
79 Entman 1990
80 Rodgers et al. 2000
81 Pritchard 1985
82 Fedler and Jordan 1996
83 quoted in Fedler and Jordan 1996
84 Greenberg et al. 1983
85 Greenberg et al. 1983
86 Alvear 1998, Carveth & Alverio 1996, Subervi-Vélez 1999, Vargas & dePyssler 1999
87 US Department of Justice 2000
88 Entman 2000
89 Since juvenile proceedings were confidential in most states prior to the 1990's, detailed articles about youth crime

were more difficult to write, and therefore, there was less to analyze in this respect.
90 Alequin et al. 2001; Baizerman & Hirak 1980; Barlow 1998; Bervera et al. 1998; Dorfman et al. 1997; Dorfman and Woodruff 1998; Gilliam & Iyengar 1998; Humphries 1981; Kunkel 1994; Males 1998; McManus and Dorfman 2000; Perrone and Chesney-Lind 1997, 1998; Song & Dombrink 1996; Stensaas 1961; Zatz 1987
91 Kunkel 1994, Dorfman et al. 1997, McManus and Dorfman 2000, Center for Media and Public Affairs 2000b
92 Baizerman and Hirak 1980
93 Baizerman and Hirak 1980:21
94 Perrone and Chesney-Lind 1998, 1997
95 Perrone and Chesney-Lind 1997:104
96 Crime Prevention and Justice Assistance Division 1998
97 Kunkel 1994
98 McManus and Dorfman 2000
99 Dorfman et al. 1997
100 In this study, the youth category included people through age 24.
101 Crime statistics here are for youth under age 18 whereas the study analyzed young people age 24 and under. This does not affect the analysis dramatically since percentages are used for both cohorts. For example, a similar percentage of young people under age 24 would be expected to have been victims or perpetrators of violence in 1993. While we would expect that young people age 24 and under would make up a higher percentage of overall violence arrests than young people under age 18, they would by no means make up 68% of violence arrests.
102 Center for Media and Public Affairs 2000b
103 Center for Media and Public Affairs 2000b:6
104 Center for Media and Public Affairs 2000b:4
105 Kunkel 1994
106 Baizerman and Hirak1980
107 Barlow 1998
108 Barlow 1998:172
109 Barlow 1998:173
110 "Modern racism" is defined by Entman as a more subtle discrimination than blatant racism, which is typified by refusal of services, denied voting rights, verbalized hostility and the like. Modern racism, on the other hand, is evident in attitudes that assume Blacks as a group are lazy, dangerous, demanding, or otherwise inferior. Cf. Entman 1990 & 1992.
111 Dorfman and Woodruff 1998
112 Graber 1990
113 Alequin et al. 2001
114 Center for Media and Public Affairs 2000b
115 Song and Dombrink 1996
116 Similarly, Zatz (1987) argues that a "Chicano gang crisis" was created in part by Phoenix newspapers, which uncritically reported police department statements about increases in the number of Chicano gangs. However, Zatz does not present the news content analysis data and so is not included in this discussion.
117 Sorenson et al. 1998
118 Bervera et al. 1998
119 Cf. FBI Uniform Crime Reports 1999 which shows that there are three times more under-18 murder victims killed by adults than by other youth; Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 1999 National Update (same finding, p 20), and Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 1996 National Report which shows that 60% of the violent victimizations of juveniles are perpetrated by adults, p 29; and Bureau of Justice Statistics, Murder in Families, July 1994 which shows that parents are six times more likely to murder teenage children than the other way around.
120 Males 1998
121 Bervera et al. 1998, Alequin et al. 2001

122 Kunkel 1994, Dorfman et al. 1997, Dorfman & Woodruff 1998, McManus & Dorfman 2000. The Center for Media and Public Affairs (2000b) study of youth finds "crime vicitimization" the top category for youth portrayals, but they do not differentiate between youth or adult perpetrators in those victimizations.
123 Males 1998
124 Greiner 1997
125 Although the juvenile homicide rate in the *summer* of 1993 (6.5 per 100,000 youth) was higher than in the *summer* of 1992 (4.6) and lower than the *summer* of 1994 (7.6).
126 Gilliam & Iyengar 1998
127 Gilliam & Iyengar 1998:46
128 Peffley et al. 1996
129 Hurwitz & Peffley 1997
130 Barlow 1998
131 Gilliam & Iyengar 2000
132 Gilens 1996
133 Gilens is careful to point out that urban poor are not more Black than rural poor – 29% and 30% respectively – but that poor Whites are less geographically concentrated, "spread around," he says, in both poor and nonpoor neighborhoods.
134 Gilens 1996:533
135 Gilens 1996:537
136 Lotke & Schiraldi 1996
137 This is less true, of course, for parts of California, Texas and other states with great racial/ethnic diversity.
138 Grenier 1997
139 Dorfman 1994
140 Cf. Gant and Dimmick 2000
141 Maltz 1977
142 US National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders 1968:383
143 Miller et al. 2001
144 ABC news poll, 1996, published by Public Agenda
145 Brooks et al. 2000
146 US DOJ FBI 1993 & 1998
147 Gilens (1996) for example, found that photo editors from *Time* and *Newsweek* overestimate the number of Blacks in poverty, though not as much as the general public does.
148 Song & Dombrink 1996, Zatz 1987, and Perrone & Chesney-Lind 1998
149 Magar 1992
150 Windhauser et al. 1990
151 McManus and Dorfman 2000
152 McManus and Dorfman 2000
153 Gant and Dimmick 2000
154 Entman 1990
155 Greenberg and Schneider (1994)
156 Deteriorating physical conditions have been associated with other public health problems such as Gonorrhea (cf. Cohen et al. 2000).
157 Cf. Solis 1997; Monmaney and Krikorian 1998; Richisson 1999.
158 Smith et al. 1999
159 See Winett 1998 for a comprehensive summary of public health research on violence to date.
160 Stevens 1998
161 Wilde 1993
162 Brown 2000
163 Associated Press 2000
164 Cf. Zillmann and Brosius 2000
165 McManus and Dorfman 2000
166 Shaw 2000: A8
167 Bervera et al. 1998
168 Cf. Rodgers and Thorson 2000
169 Sorenson et al. 1998, Pritchard and Hughes 1997
170 Dulaney 1969:604
171 Pritchard and Hughes 1997
172 Hentoff 2000
173 Cf. Montaño 1998
174 Hyman 1998
175 Grabe 1999
176 Iyengar 1991
177 Gilliam and Iyengar 2000:561
178 Cf. Wallack et al. 2000

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Appendix. Author and Year of Level One and Level Two Studies (Full citation is available in References.)

Level One Studies N=65

Antunes & Hurley 1977
Barlow 1998
Barlow et al 1995
Chavez and Dorfman 1996-7
Chermak 1998
Cohen 1975
Davis 1952
DeLouth & Woods 1996
Dennis & Sadoff 1976*
Dorfman et al. 1997
Dorfman & Woodruff 1998
Dulaney 1969
Entman 1994a
Entman 1992
Entman 1990
Estrada 1997*
Etterma & Peer 1997
Fedler & Jordan 1996
Fenton 1910
Fishman & Weimann 1985*
Gant & Dimmick 2000*
Gilliam & Iyengar 2000
Gilliam et al. 1996
Grabe 1999
Grabe 1996
Greenberg et al. 1983
Hawkins et al. 1995
Humphries 1981
Jenn & Fields 1998
Jones 1976
Johnstone et al. 1994
Lester 1994
Liska & Baccaglini 1990*
Lule 1995*
Martindale 1990*
Neild & Paylor 1996*
Oliver 1994*
Oliver 1999*
Peffley et al. 1996*
Perrone & Chesney-Lind 1997
Pride & Clarke 1978*
Pritchard 1985
Pritchard & Hughes 1997
Ramaprasad 1996*
Roqullo 1997*
Roberts 1975
Rodgers et al. 2000
Romer et al. 1998
Sanchez-Jankowski 1994*
Sentman 1983*
Sholey & Ashkins 1981
Song & Dombrink 1996
Sorenson et al. 1998
Subervi- Velez 1999
Stensaas 1961*
Tucker 1997*
Turk et al. 1989
Valentino 1999*
Vargas & dePyssler 1999
Welch et al. 1997
Weiss & Chermak 1998
Williams & Dickinson 1993*
Windhauser et al. 1990
Wright & Ross 1997*
Zalz 1987

Level Two Studies N=45

Alequin et al 2001
Alvear 1998
Baizerman & Hirak 1980
Bervera et al 1998
Carveath & Alverio 1996
Center for Media & Public Affairs 2001
Center for Media & Public Affairs 2000
Center for Media & Public Affairs 1999
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Chesney-Lind et al 1997
Dominick 1978
Elias 1994*
Entman 1994b
Entman 2000
Farkas & Duffet 1998
Gandy et al. 1996*
Garofalo 1981
Gilliam & Iyengar 1998*
Greiner 1997
Kaiser Family Foundation 1998
Klite 1998a
Klite 1998b
Klite 1995a
Klite 1995b
Klite 1995c
Krisberg 1995*
Kunkel 1994
Lee 1994
Lester & Miller 1996*
Lowry & Nio 1999*
Magar 1992*
Males 1999
McLeod et al 1995*
McManus & Dorfman 2000
McGill N.D.*
Osborn 1994
Perrone & Chesney-Lind 1997
Reeves & Campbell 1994*
Smith 1991
Turner N.D.*
Wade 1998*

*These studies were ultimately eliminated from our analysis because they were primarily about single events (coverage of Mike Tyson, O.J. Simpson, etc.), "reality" shows, media effects, photographs only, non-U.S. news, or other topics rather than analyses of general news that included crime news content or coverage of youth.

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Lori Dorfman is Director of the Berkeley Media Studies Group where she directs the group's work with community groups, journalists and public health professionals. Dr. Dorfman's current research examines how local television news and newspapers portray youth and violence. She edited *Reporting on Violence*, a handbook for journalists illustrating how to include a public health perspective in violence reporting, published by BMSG. Based on this work, she is part of an interdisciplinary team that is conducting workshops on violence reporting for newspapers and local TV news stations. Dr. Dorfman teaches a course for masters students on mass communication and public health at the School of Public Health at the University of California, Berkeley. She has published articles on public health and mass communication, and co-authored *Public Health and Media Advocacy: Power for Prevention*, (Sage Publications, 1993) and *News for a Change: An Advocates' Guide to Working With the Media* (Sage Publications, 1999). Dr. Dorfman consults for government agencies and community programs across the U.S. and internationally on a variety of public health issues including violence prevention and injury control, alcohol control, tobacco control, children's health, child care, childhood lead poisoning, affirmative action, nutrition and exercise, and women and HIV/AIDS.

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Berkeley Media Studies Group

The Berkeley Media Studies Group operates out of the belief that the mass media, especially the news, have a significant influence on people's beliefs and actions regarding public health and social issues and that the news media can be a powerful force for change. BMSG works with community groups, journalists and public health professionals to harness the power of the media to advance healthy public policy. BMSG studies the news and news gathering to support professional education for journalists and media advocacy training for grass roots and public health leadership groups. BMSG is a project of the Public Health Institute.

Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice/Justice Policy Institute

The Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice is a private, non-profit organization devoted to reducing society's reliance on incarceration as a solution to social problems. The Center provides advocacy services and direct services on behalf of youth and adults facing incarceration throughout the country, with offices in San Francisco, Washington DC, Baltimore, and Philadelphia. The Justice Policy Institute (JPI) is the research and public policy arm of the Center. Among other research topics, JPI has produced analyses of the disproportionate confinement of minorities in adult and juvenile institutions, the growing impact of America's drug war, the tradeoff between funding prisons and universities, and the impact of imprisoning youth with adults.

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